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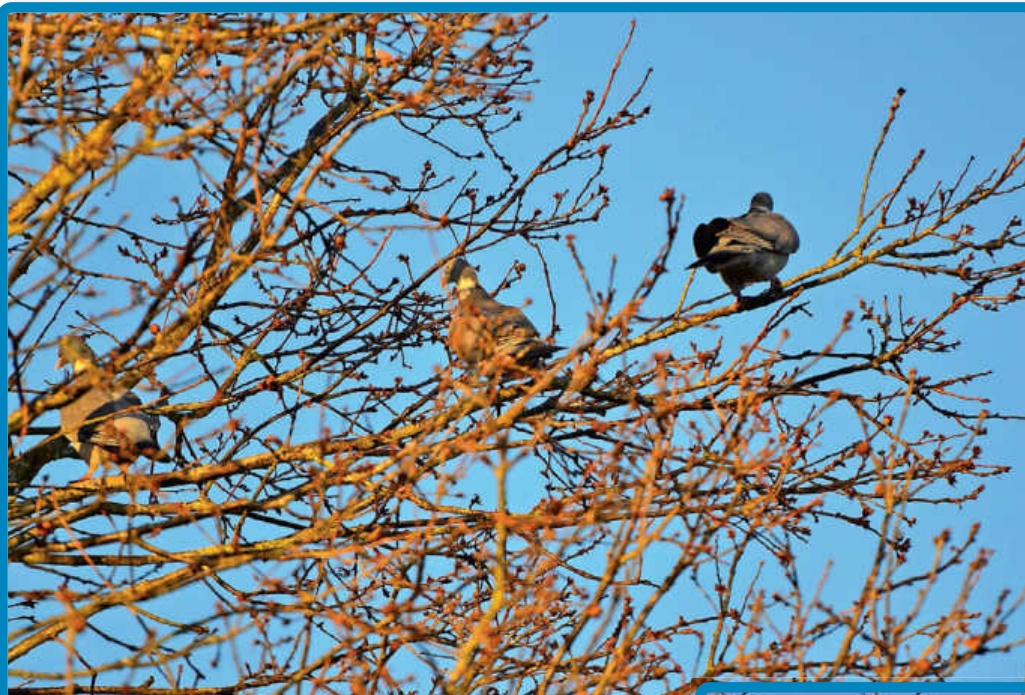
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WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



As many of you know, I'm a hunter right down to my socks, and the more I learn about Air Gunner readers the more I know that the majority of you are, too. However, I don't want the magazine to become a 'hunting only' title. I've recently been emailed by a number of readers who are new to the sport and several have asked me to write an article on basic gun cleaning. Those of us who've been around guns all our lives take this knowledge for granted but those entering our beloved sport need a little guidance in this important matter, so on page 45 I've given my best advice. Use this, and you'll have a smart and reliable gun for years to come.

Despite my life-long shooting experience, I know it's a great mistake to believe that you know everything, and I'm happy to report that I learned a great little tip from our own Jerry Moss this month. He dedicates his life to protecting those beautiful native red squirrels from the threat posed by the non-indigenous grey squirrels, quite often by shooting the invaders. Because of this, his observation skills are worlds better than mine, as is his

knowledge of animal and bird behaviour. In his monthly article, on page 90, he notes that if you can find woodpigeons feeding on the ground in the autumn and winter, you'll find grey squirrels there too. From the moment I read that, I knew he was right, but I'd never made the connection. For the last few weeks, as I've walked my dogs and hunted across my permissions, I've used this knowledge and, of course, Jerry was spot on. Even if you spook the pigeons, slow down and scan the area and trees with your binoculars and you'll find squirrels, or at least I can say that I have.

This is yet another thing I love about our sport. Yes, I've been in



the field one way or another for well over 30 years, yet the simple pleasure of learning something new that I can use to my advantage gave me a little smile, and an even closer bond to our beautiful British countryside.

Phill

EDITOR

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*Reeds R. Burt Alan C.
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IN THE NEWS

News from the Midland Game Fair

AIR ARMS GOLDEN TICKET

Who will win the Golden Ticket? It could be you!
Don't delay!

Would you like a VIP tour of the Air Arms factory, a nice lunch and a goody bag as well? Then turn to page 53 where you'll find an entry form for this brilliant competition. There will be five winners who can each bring along a guest, so get your entry in today.



IAN HODGE'S CHARITY DONATION



As a result of the Open Day Charity Clay Shoot in October, Ian and Ashleigh from Ian Hodge Shooting & Fieldsports were able to present a cheque to the Wadebridge branch of Cancer Research UK for the sum of £1650. Thanks must go to all the competitors on the day and to everyone who supported the event.

Well done to Ian Hodge guns for raising this huge amount of money for charity

SINGLE-SHOT UPGRADES

Following customer demand, Rowan Engineering has just released single-shot loaders to fit the Daystate Wolverine and Pulsar rifles. They open and close manually, keeping it as simple as possible. The workmanship meets their usual high standards and total reliability is assured.

RRP £44.95

www.rowanengineering.com



Rowan Engineering now has a single-shot loader for the Wolverine and Pulsar

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS - AGAIN!

HFT competitors using Air Arms rifles have dominated the UKAHFT series for the second successive year making them manufacturers' champions again. Claire West, the Managing Director, offered her thanks to the team shooters who performed so well throughout the season. She said, 'To win this title for the second year running is truly phenomenal. There is some tough competition out there, but our amazing team of HFT shooters proved themselves to be the greatest, again!'

www.air-arms.co.uk

Air Arms is the UKAHFT manufacturers' champion again!



BRITISH SHOOTING SHOW

Tickets are on sale now for the British Shooting Show at Stoneleigh Park on the 12th to the 14th February 2016. This venue has become the regular home to the show with its warm and dry exhibition halls being ideal to keep us from the winter weather. It's quickly become one of the most popular shows of the year, falling as it does at a time when there's not a lot going on,

and it's great to have something to look forward to. The huge Airgun City area will host many ranges where you'll be able to shoot rifles and pistols safely in the warm and dry. All the major manufacturers and importers will have their wares on display for you to see and handle before you buy. It's a great show and a firm favourite of the Air Gunner team. www.shootingshow.co.uk



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Keep up to date!



IN THE NEWS

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www.airgunshooting.co.uk

PULSAR GOES GREEN

Daystate has just announced a green stock for their exclusive electronic airgun, the Pulsar. It was always intended where customisation was possible. Last month a carbon look stock was announced and this month's test version fitted with a black stock and optional carbon side panels, so this new green alternative adds even more.

The price is expected to be the same as the black synthetic stock at £1599.00 and

represents a considerable saving over the initial Limited Edition version. The

sometime in January, while stocks last!
www.daystate.com



SILENCER SPECIAL

Huggett silencers have become the ultimate airgun accessory and they've now released a special model that has the company name and 2016 printed subtly along the side.

They're available from The Airgun Centre, Blackpool Air Rifles, Ronnie Sunshines, and Solware, or you can order one from your local gun shop. Even better, the price is the same as usual at £90.

www.huggettprecisionproducts.co.uk



The subtle and on, so classy special edition Huggett silencer. It's really worth making a noise about!

BRIGHTER AND BETTER



LED Lenser has made their top-of-the-line head torch better and brighter

LED Lenser has updated its top-of-the-line H14 head torch system, to the H14.2, with a raft of improvements. Because of this it has won the prestigious Red Dot award for its performance and function. This super high-performance lamp offers 350 lumens of LED light output, powered by four AA batteries, or there's a rechargeable option. To find your nearest dealer visit www.bisley-uk.com
RRP £84.95

HISTORICAL EDGE

Airgun specialists, The Shooting Party, have added an interesting new product to their catalogue in the form of a traditional Jim Bowie hunting knife. It features a 5½", 440 stainless steel blade, and a stag horn handle. The company owns the Jim Bowie brand, hence the name etched on the blade. It comes in a dark brown leather sheath along with a certificate of authenticity.
RRP £49.99

www.the-shooting-party.co.uk



A slice of history; a Jim Bowie knife

F FOR FOCUS

Tracer has a new range of gun lamp kits that are focusable, as the F in the name suggests. They start from the F400 model, which can be chosen with either a white, red or green LED. The F600 has the ability to change between white, red, green or blue output at the flick of a switch. Finally, the F900 is the powerhouse of the range with a claimed 800 yards range. All focus from a wide flood to a narrow beam, to suit your need at that moment. The kits are fully comprehensive, including mounts, batteries and chargers. Look out for in depth reviews in Air Gunner soon. www.deben.com/tracer

Prices start from £89.99

To take their gun lights to a new level Tracer has made them focusable



WINNER!

The winner of our November competition to win the Kral Puncher is Mark Cook from Edinburgh. He's wanted a PCP for ages so he's a happy man. See our latest competition on page 48.



Are we sitting comfortably? Then we can begin zeroing

STABLE TABLE

Precision shooting in the field is always challenging and jobs like accurate zeroing can be tough. Shooting accessory specialists Caldwell have answered this challenge with the aptly named Stable Table, which although portable is solidly constructed. The seat is adjustable for height ensuring that you can get comfortable for long shooting sessions. The rigid plastic table top has raised edges to ensure that nothing rolls off to be lost in the grass. **RRP £299.99 Carrying case £45.99**
For more information visit www.edgarbrothers.com

NORTHERN HIGHLIGHTS!

Interest is growing daily about a new event, The Northern Shooting Show, which will be held on the 7th and 8th of May 2016 at the Great Yorkshire Showground in Harrogate. We were already promised a large, dedicated airgun section and now there's more good news. The HFT Masters Series will be holding a round of their competition in the beautiful surroundings of the showground, bringing lots of top shooters to the event. Many airgun manufacturers and importers have already committed to this brand-new event that will give easy access to readers in the north of the country.

www.northernshootingshow.co.uk

The momentum is gathering, and so is the interest. Get in touch with the organisers to see what's there for you and your shooting sports!

The

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YOUR LETTERS

**LETTER
OF THE
MONTH**

Talking Turkey

Earlier in the year, Jim Chapman wrote an article about hunting wild turkeys in America with his airgun, which got me thinking. Could we hunt geese over here with an airgun, too? They're similar-sized birds and we have lots of Canada geese on my friend's farm, and they're a real pest. He has another pal who shoots them from time to time using 3" magnum loads in his 12-bore shotgun, but once

he's fired a shot they fly off and don't come back that day. What do you think?

Paul Edwards

Hello Paul, My advice to you is to leave them to the shotgun guys. Geese are big, powerful birds and they're amazingly tough. Jim used a very high-power rifle and waited a long time in a hide until he was sure that he had the

ideal shot at very close range. Please don't be tempted to try,

because I fear that a clean kill is unlikely. Ed.



Can you shoot big birds with an airgun? Yes and no

Match grade pellets

I've read a lot about competition shooters spending fortunes on match grade pellets that come in their own little egg boxes. It's claimed that these are much more accurate than pellets straight from a tin. Are they really that much better? They're way too expensive for me to use in my everyday hunting gun.

Henry Chambers

Hello Henry, Those competition types will pay anything for an advantage that might help them win a competition. It's true that match grade pellets are more consistent and cannot get damaged

in transit like the ones that come in tins can. However, the advantage they offer over high-quality pellets that have been washed, weighed, inspected and lubed is very small indeed. If you want the advantages without the cost, a little time spent selecting the best ones from any tin and keeping them safe from damage will reward you with better accuracy. Ed.

Are match grade pellets worth the extra cost?



Cheap Wad

I have just read the November issue of Air Gunner, in particular the bore cleaning tip, well, and I would like to share my way of doing this. I use the filters that smokers of hand-rolling tobacco use. For my Air Arms S400 in

.22, I use the larger tips. Firstly, I soak three or four in gun oil and fire them at an old Argos catalogue, then I put the same amount through dry. I find that this is enough to keep the bore clean. I hope that this tip will be of use to your readers.

Ian Potter

Hello Ian

That sounds like a good idea and I guess you could buy them from most corner shops. Am I right in thinking that they're quite cheap, too? Even better! If people are going to use these in spring/piston guns remember that they need a normal pellet fired through behind them, so it needs to be done where a strong and safe pellet trap is available to catch the shot. Ed.

Are these a cheap alternative to commercial wads?



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Power to the people

Being a relative newcomer to airguns, I'm quite an avid reader of several related magazines in order to absorb as much information and technique as I can. Over the 12 months that I've been reading test reports in them, one thing has struck me. On not one occasion do I remember it being mentioned that a full-powered rifle submitted for test actually fell below 11.3 - 11.5 ft. lbs. The majority were reported as just being under the legal limit. Now, I own two mid-range, British-made air rifles, both bought new within the last 12 months, and I've seen magazine tests on them both, and as I've just mentioned, their respective power outputs were reported at just sub.12 ft. lbs. However, both my guns (differing model and calibre) have only tested through my Combro chronograph around the 10.7 ft. lbs. mark. To ensure that it wasn't testing error on my part, a local gunsmith kindly ran quite thorough tests through his Skan, with identical results, pretty much, taking the time to go right through the usable pressure range and with the widely accepted choice of test pellet.

This gunsmith said the figure was fairly standard for the majority of guns, especially the British ones that he's tested in recent years, and he has formed the opinion that manufacturers err on the side of caution,

power-wise to ensure that their guns are safely within UK law. Reading comments left on a couple of airgun forums, it's interesting to note that many people have had a similar experience.

Would I be correct in thinking that the particular rifles supplied to you by the makers for testing have inevitably been chosen, and if necessary adjusted, for maximum UK legal power and that they may not be fully representative - power-wise - of the 'normal', possibly untweaked examples that the public buys? Perhaps it's naïve on my part not to think otherwise, but then again, I am just a newbie!

Stephen Davies

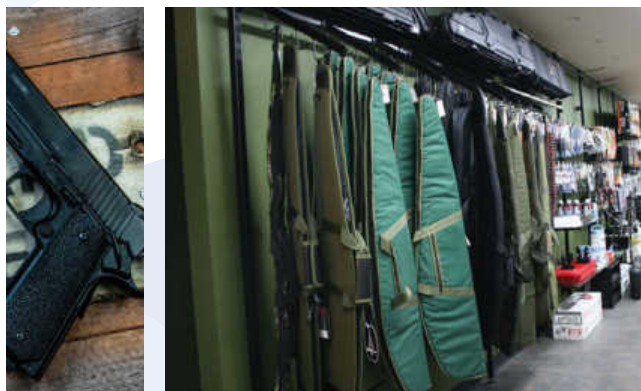
Hello Steve, You are right that most importers and manufacturers set their rifles on the safe side of the law, but no, we don't get specially tuned ones. In fact, if you saw some of the ones we're sent, you'd laugh! Many guns will make significantly more power with one pellet than another, and the law says that if a gun is 'capable' of exceeding 12 ft.lbs. muzzle energy it becomes illegal. Therefore, the manufactures are doing the right thing and keeping us, and our sport, safe. The difference in performance between 11 ft. lbs. and 12 is very small in the real world, so please don't let it worry you. Airguns are all about accuracy and if your guns are - then you can be happy. Ed.



Don't worry if your gun doesn't make 11.9 ft.lbs.



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phill.price@archant.co.uk

Pure Joy

It was with absolute delight that I read the article 'A Little Bit of Everything', in the December issue of your magazine. To me, it reflected the nostalgia and pure joy of airgun shooting and reminded me of my first air rifle - a Diana - and the hours of fun shooting at my plastic soldiers in the back garden. Alas, now as a family, we haven't got an endless supply of money, neither do we have a car, which makes both £1600 rifles, £400 scopes, or trips around the country out of our compass. We do however enjoy 'back garden' airgunning. I have a few knock-down targets set up in safe positions in the garden and a gallery-type target that supplies endless hours of fun. Yes, we tend to choose the cheaper end of the air rifle spectrum, and open sights, but this in no way diminishes the joy we get from our shooting or informal competitions. I am always pleased when the postman delivers your magazine, reading it several times, wondering if one day I will ever be able to join the realms of those HFT shooters, or have a 100-acre shoot.

Plinking is fun for everybody, not just beginners



In the meantime, would it be possible for you to include a few articles for those people with backyard ranges and limited income? We all enjoy 'Air Gunner' and continue to enjoy the fun that airgunning provides for the whole family.

Ray Armstead

Hello Ray, I'm glad you enjoyed the article. Plinking is the starting point for many of our readers, some of whom are happy to continue doing just that, whilst others spread their wings and go on to other parts of our sport. We regularly cover plinking guns and I've asked one of our writers to look at back-garden



WIN

If you have a top tip, something you'd like to get off your chest, or an interesting anecdote, then why not shoot us a line? **We print the best letters and emails each month and one will be awarded a top prize. It's over £60 and you could win it simply by getting in touch and sharing your views**

targets and pellet catchers for an upcoming article. Ed

Join Us

Just a quick 'thank you', from me to you and all involved in the brilliant magazines you produce. I am a South African who moved to the UK six months ago - originally from Cape Town, now living in Bracknell. I owned five air rifles before the 'big move'; Walther LGV Competition Ultra, Weihrauch HW50S, QB79, Gecado 25 and a Hatsan AT 44-10, all in .177. I thoroughly enjoy the magazines every month. It's my only fix from the withdrawal symptoms I'm suffering. I saved up for a new rifle twice already, only to have the funds used for

more important things - car repairs, school clothes etc. I really hope to get back into the shooting scene as soon as possible. My son (11) and I were both members of an HFT club, back in South Africa. He was really good at it and was Under 12 champion for two years in a row. Hunting with an air rifle is illegal in SA, so for me to see all the pictures and articles about hunting makes me suffer even more, because I did a lot of hunting with centrefire rifles. It was a yearly occasion in hunting season to go on our hunt for springbuck, oryx, kudu and eland. Thanks once again! Looking forward

to the next month's publication.

Brian Hopley

*Hello Brian
I'm glad you enjoy the magazine. Have you considered joining a club? Mine is in Bisley, just a short drive from Bracknell. We have loan rifles that you could use until you've had time to save up for your own, so you could get some trigger time soon. We have lots of space, tons of targets and plenty of juniors, so your son will fit right in. Come down us see us soon! www.bfto.org.uk Ed.*



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 Ⓢ PACK OF TARGET Ⓢ TEST CERTIFICATE Ⓢ LIFETIME GUARANTEE (RIFLE ONLY £1,420)

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PACKAGE INCLUDES Ⓢ DAYSTATE HUNTSMAN REGAL Ⓢ TOP QUALITY HAWKE MOUNTS
 Ⓢ HAWKE ECLIPSE 3-12 X 50 AO IR OR 4-16 X 50 AO IR MIL-DOT TELESCOPIC SIGHT
 Ⓢ DAYSTATE MARK 6 SILENCER Ⓢ DAYSTATE HARD CASE Ⓢ TILT BI-POD
 Ⓢ DEBEN SUPER SLING AND SWIVELS Ⓢ TEST CERTIFICATE Ⓢ LIFETIME GUARANTEE
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 SERIAL NUMBER Ⓢ BLUE PRINT MOUNTS Ⓢ FITTED DAYSTATE HARD CASE WITH
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 Ⓢ HAWKE ECLIPSE 3-12 X 50 AO IR OR 4-16 X 50 AO IR MIL-DOT TELESCOPIC SIGHT
 Ⓢ DAYSTATE MARK 6 SILENCER Ⓢ DAYSTATE HARD CASE Ⓢ DEBEN SUPER SLING
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4-16x50
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SHORT RANGE STROBE NITE-SITE

1 integral LED - 150m range
150m range - 150m range
Weight including battery 430g
Operational run time up to 15 hours
Illumination range 100 metres (100 Yards)

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UKA HFT

ROUNDS 5 & 6 MALDON

Gary Chillingworth gets up right up to date with the HFT scene

Back in the summer, when the sun was warm and the ground was dry, my home club - Maldon and District Airgun Club, the best HFT club in the country (I have no bias) - hosted rounds 5 & 6 of the UKA HFT National Series.

For 2015, there was to be a challenge of two Titans of the course-setting world, but as these two were on holiday, Vince Holland and Richard Woods stepped in and decided to have a go. In the red corner, Richard had been dealt the low blow. He had been given an open piece of land and a hill. Meanwhile in the blue corner,

Vinny had the woodland and a team of helpers.

Day 1 (the Saturday) would be held on the red course and Richard had pulled out all the stops not only to make sure that the shooters had a great day, but also that they would go home and speak about a course that was a mixture of pure evil and true technical challenge. Richard is one of the top HFT shooters in the country, and he used all of his years of knowledge as a shooter to put on a truly spectacular course. Every trick in the book was used from range traps and elevation, to

targets with reduced faceplates and targets that were just plain small, but despite this, what we will all remember is the wind.

Fearsome reputation

The hill section at Maldon has a fearsome reputation and this is why it is seldom used. The wind whips across the fields and when it hits the bottom of this mighty undulation it gathers pace, and by the time it arrives at the



Above: Laura with her new gun

targets, it has built up such a head of steam that it could move a mortar round off target, let alone an 8.4grain pellet.

One particular target was on peg 27; it was a 25mm target at 40 yards and it was a little bird. The wind was coming from right to left - which I knew because when I picked the string up, it was bowing in this direction; in fact, a few people had mentioned that the strings were being pulled through their hands by the wind. I looked at the target and started to aim off, 1 mil-dot then 2, then 3 and when I ran out of mil-dots on my scope I pulled the trigger and waited; to my amazement, the target fell and the two points were mine. Unfortunately, this was one of the few targets that I killed that day, but heigh-ho, it was a fun course to shoot.

On the Sunday, the course was very different. Vinny is quite a technical chap and he is never happier then when he has a clipboard in his hand. Now, Vinny has not been shooting long and the annoying thing is, he is not

Left: You don't have to be mad to shoot at M.A.D. but its helps

Below: We had a great turnout from the ladies





Above: Every rifle is chronographed to ensure that it's legal

Right: Steve Edmonson was the lucky winner of the Team Wild TX200

Far right: Richard Woods receives his winner's trophy from Pete Dutton



Left: Charlotte Edmonson should always know there are cameras around and yes, her toe nails do match the rifle



Left: Laura Dickenson collects her HW100 with her father from M.A.D.'s Richard Woods

Below: Yet another miss for Greg Hensman. By now he should be used to it



only a very good shot - the current world champion - but it also appears that he is a very good course setter.

Vinny's course was quite simple, but I don't mean simple as in 'easy'; there were no gimmicks, it was a great old-fashioned HFT course, and everything was there in front of you to shoot - and there was nothing to try to trick you. If the target looked long, it was long. What Vinny had done, though, was to create a course

"The thing I love about my home club of Maldon is the diversity we have within it"

on which you needed to be precise.

There were a lot of targets set with branches above the targets, so if you got your trajectory wrong by under- or over-ranging, then you would hear your pellet go 'thud' into some wood. Vinny did such a good job; he even got a few people to storm off the course. There were some shooters who totally missed quite a few targets early on and instead of staying for the fun of it, dummies were thrown out of prams, and they were last seen wheel-spinning out the car park.

Very different

Both of the courses were great, but for very different reasons; Richard's was a head scratcher and Vinnie's was just plain hard. The thing I love about my home club of Maldon is the diversity we have within it. Everyone chips in and does their bit to make the club what it is. Richard and Vinny may have set the course, but the team of helpers was huge. On the day, you could see Maldon members running about with water for the shooters, and then there were members like Jim Lowe and his wife, who manned



the side shoot for two days and did a wonderful job. Jim chose not to shoot the national, so that he could remain on the side-shoot to give everyone an equal chance. No matter what needed to be done, there was someone willing to help and this is what I love about club life in the world of HFT.

We do need to know who won over the two days:

On the Saturday, Colin (Tugg) Wilson took the Open; Kyle Hampton won

the Recoiling; Edward Tandi was .22 champ; Mia Roberts was top lady; Jennifer Allen won the Juniors 14-16; and Mitchel Birch was Top Junior 9-13. The Manufacturer's Trophy went to Steyr, and the Team event went to Maldon. The round was sponsored by Hull Cartridge and Junior shooter, Laura Dickson, won a stunning HW100.

On Sunday, the Open was taken by Richard Woods; the Ladies by Theresa Reed; the Juniors 14-16 by her son, Elliot Reed; the 9-13 was taken by Laura Dickson with her new HW100; the .22 by Edward Tandi; the Team event was taken by Maldon, and the Manufacturer's by Walther.

The round was sponsored by Team Wild, and Steve Edmonson won a stunning special edition, Air Arms TX200.

The National shooting season is soon coming to an end for 2015, but if this article has piqued your interest, then check out the three great winter series of HFT. These are the Southern Hunters, the Midland Hunters and the Gauntlet. Information on all of these shoots can be found at www.shooting-the-breeze.co.uk ■



SUREFIRE SUCCESS

Yet another powerful little black torch, but this one has brains

My first-ever super-torch was a Surefire, and I still own it to this day. It was built like a tank and used by elite military teams, so I knew it was tough. It emitted 65 lumens, a power that topped anything I'd ever seen before, so I just had to have one; it was also more expensive than anything I'd seen before, but I saved up and bought it. Surefire remains one of the most respected names in the world of torches, or 'flashlights' as the Americans will insist on calling them, supplying frontline soldiers and police units who need kit that won't let them down, no matter what.

I review a lot of torches and, to be honest, I thought I'd seen it all. They're mostly a similar size; they all run on two Cr123A lithium disposables, or one 18650 rechargeable battery; they all have machined aluminium bodies sealed with 'O' rings. The better ones have huge light output, with the ability to dim them for close-up work, and by 'huge output' I mean 500 to 600 lumens - that's 10 times better than my first Surefire. Unless you've

seen one of these things working, you simply won't believe just how powerful they are.

Of course, more power isn't always what you want. Filling magazines or loading the car can be painful with 600 lumens reflecting in your eyes, and although most dimmable torches have a button you can press to toggle through the settings - low, brighter,

Below: The black tube in the reflector contains the light sensor

Surefire has developed a technology to leapfrog all its competitors



brighter still, and then brightest, followed by low again - it gets on my nerves when I just want to go from low to high and back again. Also, many of the switches are too small to be felt with cold fingers, which they often are when you're out lamping in the autumn, winter and spring.

Surefire has developed a technology to leapfrog all its competitors, by inventing the Intellbeam, which eliminates these problems in a stroke. Inside the reflector is a sensor which judges how much light is bouncing back, and dims the output automatically, so up close it dims down, and at long range it dials up full power - no more searching for switches.

The light quality is first class, showing a hot centre with a decent amount of peripheral light, and the colour temperature is a natural, warm tone that renders the typical greens and browns of the countryside faithfully. I think it's fair to say that the company has retaken its crown as the 'king of the hill' and is again the leader in this class of light. It isn't cheap - but then the very best never is! ■

Right: Power is supplied by Cr123A lithium cells



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THE BIG TEST

ON THE FIRING LINE THIS MONTH:
T PU



BULLPUP CONVERSION

The editor waits to see if this remarkable rifle can change his opinion of bullpups

Bullpups are big fashion at the moment, with every major manufacturer adding them to their range, except BSA. I'll put my cards on the table up front and say that they didn't appeal to me at all. I understand the list of perceived benefits including their short length, but I don't remember having trouble with guns that were too long. Apart from their Marmite looks, I simply don't get the handling. I like a rifle that slips into my shoulder and is on aim as my cheek hits the comb, and there's no better example of that than Daystate's own Huntsman Regal. This rifle is the best handling airgun I've ever owned. It seems to know where I want to aim and takes itself there. I also own a Daystate Mk4, albeit in a Mk3 stock. The reason for the change of timber is because it handles better. This is a high-power version that's been my everyday hunting gun for close to five years, so I know it like the back of my hand.

I told Daystate's Marketing Director my thoughts and the words in his response that I am able to print went along the lines of, 'You're missing the point. Get off your arse, get out in the field and find out what the Pulsar can do for your shooting.' Oops! That didn't go well. I thought that I'd better do as I was told, then.

Legacy

In some respects, the Pulsar is the successor to my trusty Mk4 because it uses an electronic firing system programmable to suit your needs. In

batteries, which provide enough juice for 14,000 shots. The screen warns you when there are 1000 shots left, which should be enough time for even the laziest shooter to fit some new

"The pistol grip of the Pulsar is actually an aftermarket upgrade for a Kalashnikov AK47"

Below: I was impressed at just how still the Pulsar was when fired

the left cheek piece is a small LCD screen that tells you current reservoir pressure and the other information you need for programming. Power is supplied by six common or garden AA

cells. I really like the idea of standard batteries so that you can change them at any time, simply by removing one stock bolt.

An electronic action offers a huge



"At one point, I hit three acorns with the same number of shots at 55 yards"

advantage to the bullpup design in that you can place the trigger anywhere you like and simply run wires back to the motherboard.

Triggers that need a direct mechanical linkage can have their problems, so this solution makes perfect sense. The pistol grip of the Pulsar is actually an



Above: I like these magazines. They work well for me

Left: Off hand the ergonomics were just right

Left: From kneeling, they worked well too

Bottom left: From prone, the large drop to heel worked against me

Below: The high comb offered excellent support

aftermarket upgrade for a Kalashnikov AK47, which the design team felt met their needs. It fills the hand well and is ambidextrous, as is the rest of the rifle. It's not easy to see, but the synthetic cheek piece and metal side lever can be swapped from side to side with some basic tools in just a few minutes, so lefties are fully catered for.

Up front, the large diameter, aluminium reservoir is filled through an industry standard Forster fitting that I like very much. They're simple and strong, and most filling hoses have the female part as standard so you needn't worry about forgetting an adaptor. I was pleased to see that the metal cover for this screws on. The one on my Mk4 is held on by the friction of an 'O' ring and I've come close to losing it several times. The large reservoir and frugal Harper firing valve means that we'll get 250





shots .177, and 300 shots .22. Think about that; that's half a tin of pellets out of one 200bar fill, from a gun that's

on here.

Power and performance

Over the chronograph it varied no more than 10 fps shot-to-shot over 100 pellets straight from the tin. I used Daystate's new Kaiser .22 which weigh 14.66 grains. At the

feeling for the Pulsar was to drop in at my gun club where I can shoot

as from a covered area that has plenty of benches and chairs. This allows me to test the rifle, not my skills. As seems to be the norm for my visits, there was an inconsistent wind that went from almost still to howling, so reading it was vital.

I zeroed the Pulsar in minutes and steadily worked my way down the range from one target to the next. This was my 'back of a fag packet' way of learning the trajectory and how it related to the complex reticle of the pre-production Optisan scope that Daystate had fitted. Before long, I was connecting with the 55-yard targets with some consistency, wind accepted. There are lots of oaks on our range and my club mates were lining up acorns downrange where they made tricky yet satisfying targets as they exploded on impact. At one point, I hit three with the same number of shots at 55 yards, so that I knew there was nothing more to be asked about the rifle's accuracy.

When our sister magazine had a .177 Pulsar in for review some time ago, I had the chance to take a few shots with it on the same range, and I noticed something interesting. I was surprised at just how many pellets I could see in flight. What's even more interesting to me is that I noticed exactly the same thing with the .22 synthetic. This set me thinking about why that should be. I've heard a theory that when a gun is totally still on firing, the image through the scope is perfect and therefore our eye is better able to see the pellet's trajectory.

Hunting gun

Shooting from a stable bench, off heavy sandbags, is the perfect test of a rifle/scope/pellet combination, but it's highly artificial. I'm a hunter through and through, so I wanted to get the Pulsar into the field. I'm

Above: The synthetic stock was fitted with the optional carbon-fibre panels

Left: Even at 55 yards the accuracy was spot-on

"six common or garden AA batteries, which provide enough juice for 14,000 shots"



SPECS

Model: Pulsar
Manufacturer: Daystate
Country of origin: UK/Italy
Price: £1595.00
Mag: £50.00
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Stock type: Synthetic, ambidextrous sporter
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I love a
pretty
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are tool
world. You can order your Pulsar with
a handsome, laminated wood stock,
or even a fancy walnut one, but the
black synthetic would be my choice
every time.

Every bullpup faces a challenge;
because your face is on top of
the action, the scope needs to be
elevated to a height where you can
see comfortably through its axis. I
have a huge head and a wide face to
match, so I often find it difficult to
see through a bullpup's scope unless
it's mounted very high, and the scope
on test sat 2¾" above the centre line
of the bore, a full inch higher than
the typical PCP. At long range this has
little effect, but for close-range shots
you need to know the trajectory. With
an optimised trajectory zeroed at 32
yards, our .22 Kaiser will be no more
than ½" above or below the sight line
from 11 to 36 yards. It becomes tricky
at 10 yards, when it will be ¾" low, so
you'd have to aim ¾" high. I've shot
lots of rats and feral pigeons at that
range or even closer, and it always
feels odd to aim high when you're so
close to the target. This isn't unique
to the Pulsar; it's just a bullpup trait.

Laser rangefinding

Some years ago, I was working on the
problem of rangefinding when a pal
and I developed the use of a laser.
The idea is, you mount it so that it
intersects your cross hairs at your
zero, so any distance closer or farther
shows up in your scope; we learned
that mounting it low made it less
vulnerable to damage and increased
the separation between it and the
scope. Daystate have taken this idea



Above: You'll either
love or loathe the looks

into
production by
mounting the laser inside
the stock at a great distance

Firstly, it
cannot fire unless

closed, so no more
high-pressure air
blowing back in
your face as the
pellet lands short.

Next, it cannot double
The magazine is indexed

employ this method, and they'll
laugh at the suggestion. For me,
it's one of the greatest technical
improvements to accurate shooting I
can think of, and I'm so happy to see
a production gun with it installed.
You have to use it in the field to
fully understand, but trust me, you'll
bag more quarry using this method. I
guarantee it.

This is just one of the reasons
that I believe the Pulsar is the most
technologically advanced rifle on sale
today, but there are other features
that make a difference to the
hunter in the real world. Take the
redesigned loading system that the
Pulsar inherits from the Wolverine:

and yet so important to the hunter.
These are guns made by hunters and
I applaud them for taking airgun
design forward so cleverly.

I'll confess that having spent time
with this rifle I've softened my anti-
bullpup position. It's a remarkable
rifle in many ways that brings
real-world technical advancement to
the hunting field. The handling is
always going to be a 'love it or loathe
it' situation, and I implore anybody
seriously thinking about buying
it to handle one on the range. My
club mates' opinions are divided, as
are our readers', but those who like
bullpups love the Pulsar, and they're
selling like hot cakes to prove it. ■

Bottom: The cocking
lever pivots below
your ear





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| HW100T QF | .177 / .22 | 410mm | 3.8kg |
| HW100KS QF | .177 / .22 | 310mm | 3.4kg |
| HW100S QF | .177 / .22 | 410mm | 3.8kg |



This month sees the deadly duo taking on a bunny-bashing session that had been planned since our last outing together on the pigeons. The ground I had chosen for this session was a local one, which I had not shot on for a while. When taking a friend on one of your grounds, it is pretty important that they know where your boundaries are, and the lie of the land. It is bad enough when shooting in daylight, if you're not aware of any unseen ditches or little streams that are covered over with greenery, and I know this only too well. I have been invited on grounds myself, and got a good drenching after falling into a raging torrent of a stream at night. I had planned to meet Mick on an hour before dark so that we could have a walk around and I would show him the hotspots where he should see a few rabbits, plus all the obstacles that could hurt an unsuspecting hunter concentrating on his prey.

Once confident that Mick would not be in any danger, we headed back to the truck for a cuppa and to discuss the plan of attack. We decided it would be better to take half of the ground each; there is a track that the farmer has made right through the middle of the fields, and this was our boundary. We also made sure that no matter how tempting, we would not shoot toward the track, just in case one of us was behind the chosen target. It is surprising how far a ricochet can travel, so be safe whenever you go out with a partner.

This session was also going to be a tester for my

Main: Peeping around a big tree offers support and cover

"I took the torch from my bag and then realised I had left my mount at home. What a prat!"

new Hawke Air Max scope in the dark under lamping conditions, and fingers crossed, was going to be as good as I know it is in low light. As always, I let Mick take the best fields to give him a few shots - there's nothing worse than seeing a grown man crying because he has seen nothing (hundreds!) to shoot at, and missed them all, so I knew he would get some action where I was sending him.

Ready to go

Mick was the first to get his rifle ready. He had set his torch above his scope on a Weaver mount that was attached to the scope; it was a pretty neat set-up and did not alter the

balance of the gun at all. I would be using the trusty T7 LED Lenser with a figure-of-eight mount. I took the torch from my bag and then realised I had left my mount at home. What a prat! I never forget to take that because it's in the bag with the torch all the time. Well, I'm not a defeatist, so I decided just to hold the torch under the stock and see how I got on with it. Magazines were all loaded up and Mick made a drink for us whilst we eagerly waited for it to get dark.

Once it was dark enough, Mick set off on his own to the top half of the ground, and me, I went to the gate more or less opposite where we had been chatting and having a drink. Shining the torch with its green filter on, I spotted a pair



WINDY

CONSIDERATIONS

Eddie Jones goes lamping but the weather isn't kind

of eyes no more than 20 yards away, and I was pretty shocked that this rabbit was feeding so close to where we had been talking. I had always used red light on this ground, so a change might give me an edge on those that had eluded me when using the red in the past. When the beam hit the rabbit's eyes, it sat up, looking in my direction, so I settled the stock on top of the torch and tried to find the rabbit in the scope. I had no trouble seeing it either; the torch lined up pretty well with the scope and I soon had the cross hair placed right between its eyes. Gently pulling the trigger on the Impact, I sent the pellet on its way. The rabbit was hit hard, and it leapt in the air and settled on its back, kicking a little until it took its last breath.

Good start

Now that was a good start! One rabbit, and Mick was probably only 50 yards away down the track. I climbed the gate, set off to retrieve, and then after a short walk back to the truck to stash the rabbit, I set off again in search of my next shot. I had now reached the far end of the track, and this led into the first field that I had planned to

Main: Getting low and using the hipod made a big difference in the wind

visit. The field is bordered by hawthorn and that offers great cover for the rabbits to build their home underneath it, so I scanned the field with the torch and could see three rabbits feeding some 70 yards away from the hedge.

I knew where the warren was that these rabbits were using, so I headed straight there and then shone into the field again. There were still two rabbits out there, so I fixed the torch on one of them and started to walk slowly toward it. As a lot of experienced lampers will know, if you can get between a rabbit and its warren, you will usually get it to squat and try to hide - don't get me wrong, it is not a

guarantee, but it does work most of the time. All the rabbit wants to do is go to its safe haven, but it knows something isn't right and doesn't want to run past you, so it will squat down as low as possible.

I managed to get close enough for a shot, but lifting the gun to get steady was near impossible because the wind was blowing like it was trying to stop me getting a shot - the gun was waving all over the place. It must have been blowing 30mph, and I was getting cheesed off because I had done all the hard work and was unable to get the shot off. No matter how hard I tried I could not stay steady, so I had to walk

"I was pretty shocked that this rabbit was feeding so close to where we had been talking"



away and leave the rabbit for another day. This was now beginning to be a pain. As soon as I was in the open, I couldn't shoot with confidence. I managed to get five in the scope, only to leave it because I didn't want to take pot shots at them.

Watch the wind

I decided to take the bottom track, to keep the wind behind the trees that lined the path, so I could look through a gap and shine, and if one was close

Inset: We could have done much better but the wind was just too strong

enough I would shoot with the wind behind me. This method worked, after walking up and down while giving the rabbits time to come back out, and I managed to put four more in the bag over the next couple of hours. I had received a call from Mick earlier in the session, and he had been having the same trouble, so he'd decided to use his bipod a lot and wait for them to emerge from their warrens then take his shot, and by doing this and using anything he could rest on, he managed another six to the bag.

I know that if the conditions had

been right, and the hurricane that had come down on us had been a bit less fierce, we would have doubled - if not tripled - our bag. There were rabbits in nearly every field we looked in, so maybe next time we will be lucky. One thing that impressed me most was the Air Max; the cross hairs in torchlight were as clear as in daylight, and that is what I had been searching for a very long time. Well, I have run out of space again. With the dark nights now upon us, I hope you can go out and get some bumper bunny bags yourself, and enjoy the thrills of lamping, as I

"This was now beginning to be a pain; as soon as I was in the open I could not shoot with confidence"



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THE DOMINATOR EFFECT

Keith Warburton reviews an impressive under-lever bargain

If you are buying a spring-powered rifle, why would you go for an under lever? The answer is quite simple: a break-barrel air rifle has more potential to be less accurate than an under lever, because by definition it has to have a hinge mechanism and a barrel-latching arrangement, both of which might be prone to unwanted movement. An under lever has none of these. That's not to say break-barrel rifles aren't accurate – they are, but if you want to maximise the potential for accuracy you'll almost certainly go for an under lever; you generally don't see break-barrels in HFT or FT competitions.

You have a lot of choice, ranging from under £200 to over £450 so at less than £300, the Hatsan Dominator 200W falls in the middle. So what do you get for your money? The short answer is 'a heck of a lot'.

I was hugely impressed by the value of this package. First of all you'll be delighted with the Turkish walnut stock (synthetic is also available) as opposed to the more common beech stock supplied as standard on many guns or, if you buy really cheaply,

height comb which is easily set by using a coin, so you can be sure of getting a perfect fit. There is attractive chequering on both sides of the palm swell and on the fore end, helping to give you a secure grip without having to hold it too tightly, which can kill a spring rifle's accuracy. The Hatsan also has a ventilated and cushioned butt pad,

and here's another very pleasant free extra; you get a set

of three butt-pad spacers, meaning you can extend the reach in increments of 5mm. So then, this is a rifle which from the outset has been designed to fit you well, and a good fit helps to ensure consistent accuracy.

The bonus items don't stop with adjustability. The stock has been drilled and fitted with sling swivels to suit the sling that is included in the box. On the fore end, the swivel is recessed into the left-hand side of the stock to allow for the cocking action, and on the butt it is in the conventional position, underneath. As a final little bonus, you even get a bipod thrown in!

Let's temper this praise with a little negativity, though. There were a couple



Main: The Hatsan delivered consistent power when tested over the chrono

Above: This rifle delivers a lot of performance for your money

something that looks as if it was a factory floorboard in a previous life. So you are already ahead of the game.

Adjustable

The ambidextrous stock comes with another great benefit; an adjustable

"What do you get for your money? The short answer is 'a heck of a lot'"



of tiny areas of uneven finishing on the stock, and a small flat on the barrel. If I had paid £450 for the rifle I might have quibbled, but not at £290 – especially when you consider the alternatives you might find at that price.

Lots of logos

The bluing on the metalwork is fine, although there is quite a lot of overprinting on it, including the Hatsan logo, and promotions for Edgar Brothers, (the importers), the Quattro trigger and the patented Shock Absorber System, together with serial number, calibre and a warning not to blank fire it. Just in case you forget which rifle you're shooting, the name is deeply laser-cut

into the stock, just above the trigger on the right-hand side.

This is a full-length rifle, but a shorter carbine is also available. A key difference between the two is that the rifle comes with fibre-optic sights and the carbine doesn't; instead, it is screw-cut to accept a standard silencer. The front sight is mounted on a fluted lump of polycarbonate, the design of which you'll either like or not. Personally, I don't think it looks very pretty, but there again, it doesn't have to. It does, however, look purposeful.

The action of the rifle might seem familiar to owners of some other makes of rifles, combining as it does an anti-bear trap latch as well as a



Above: The safety is properly ambidextrous

Above left: The cocking lever is unlatched using two fingers on push-forward buttons on each side

Below: Laser etching ensures a non-slip grip, and reminds you of the rifle's name

Below right: The rear sight is fully adjustable and has fibre-optic inserts

safety catch. One feature of the safety catch is that whilst it is automatically set when you cock the rifle, and you can easily (and ambidextrously) flick it up into the fire position, you can also reset it back to safe if you wish. I have mixed feelings about this; there is always the risk of leaving the rifle cocked and someone else picking it up, expecting it not to be loaded. You can picture the rest. The anti-bear trap helps to ensure that you finish your shooting session with the same number of fingers as when you started.

The Dominator comes with a combined Weaver and dovetail rail, increasing your options and making it acceptable in the USA as well as elsewhere in the world - Hatsan exports to 95 countries.

After giving the rifle a good wipe down and degreasing the barrel, I finished off by lightly oiling it inside

That ambidextrous stock comes with another great benefit – an adjustable height comb"





"It had fired less than 50 pellets, yet I got 10-shot grouping within 12mm at 30 yards"

and out, then giving the barrel a final clean before I shot it. I mounted one of my Nikko Stirling Gameking scopes using Sportmatch mounts. Hatsan says that their Shock Absorber System removes the need for shock-absorbing mounts and will prolong the life of scopes and rifle components. That may well be the case, but I still used the arrestor pin in the mount, locating in a corresponding hole in the mounting rail.

The under lever is unlatched by pushing forward a thumb and finger button - the carbine version is latched with a ball catch. Pull back the cocking

arm and the loading port slides open to reveal the barrel end, which is nicely chamfered to facilitate inserting the pellet.

Chrono

Before doing any shooting, I tested the rifle's power, as every airgunner should. The rifle delivered an average of 768 fps over a 10-shot string - just over 11 ft. lbs. and I would expect this to creep up as the rifle beds in.

I then zeroed the rifle and scope combo, using JSB 8.44 grain pellets. It usually takes a good 50-plus shots

Above: Lettering on the action tells you all you need to know

Below: The Dominator's barrel needed eight cleaning patches before Keith was happy with it

Below right: That's great accuracy from any gun

for a barrel to become leaded and give consistent shot placement. While I was doing that, I adjusted the Quattro trigger, which allows you to tune the first stage weight of pull and length of travel, also the weight of the second stage let-off. Hatsan claim this is a 'match' trigger and I'd have to go along with that. The first stage stops cleanly and firmly, then only the slightest pressure is needed for the sears to release. It is in the same league as the best mechanical triggers I've used.

Like all new springers, the Dominator would benefit from a good internal clean. It was slightly rough to cock, and the trigger sears would probably benefit from a bit of a polish, but the performance out of the box was nothing short of impressive. It had fired less than 50 pellets, yet I got 10-shot grouping within 12mm at 30 yards. I think that's a great result, shooting outside in a slight breeze. I would be quite happy to shoot this rifle in a competition and I can't offer higher praise than that, but I'm far from perfect, so I asked several of the experienced springer shooters at Lea Valley Airgun Club try it out, and they were all as impressed as me. This is a seriously good rifle, and if you are in the market for an under lever springer you really should consider the Hatsan Dominator 200W. ■

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PHOENIX RISING

Jim Chapman takes his high-power rifle to a friend's farm after those feed-eating ferals

Arizona is the next port of entry after leaving California on an eastbound route. The terrain changes from the sand dunes and creosote of the lower Mojave to what I think is arguably one of the most beautiful desert-scapes in existence, the Sonoran desert. With a huge variety of native cactus - the red barrel cactus and the mighty saguaro are the defining flora of this ecosystem - it is impressive. Moving up north will transport you out of the desert into the world's largest ponderosa pine forest, with mountains over 9000 feet in elevation. There are several game animals that call the state home; whitetail and mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, javalina, mountain lion, bear, coyote, rabbits, squirrels, and a variety of game birds - it is a hunter's paradise. In addition, there are many non-game species that inhabit this desert and the surrounding mountains, making it a great place to enjoy nature, hunting or not! This summer trip was outside the legal hunting season for most species, so I wasn't planning on pursuing any of these game animals, and yet I was coming to shoot!

To this end, I found myself flying down to Phoenix on one of the discount carriers that are popping up. As I've mentioned in other articles, the US is a very large country, and I hunt all over it. One of my tactics for managing expenses is to use these

'no-frills' carriers to buy cheap tickets; in this case, the 4000-mile round-trip journey cost about \$150, but where the airlines get you is charging for every little 'extra', such as baggage, which can more than double the fare. My workaround is to ship guns and gear by UPS or Fedex to be held for pick-up on arrival. Besides being less expensive and logistically easier, the guns have always been awaiting my arrival in perfect condition. This trip was even easier because I didn't need to bring my own shooting gear, and the little daypack I was allowed to carry on easily handled the lightweight fishing shirts and convertible bush pants (Trousers, old chap! Ed.) that I prefer to wear for this type of shooting. I do carry a lightweight camouflage mesh coverall, and that weighs a few ounces

Main: As one is hit the others fly, but not for long

Below: The rails around the farm make excellent roasts

yet converts anything I wear into camo, but it wouldn't be required on this outing.

Hello buddy

I was joining my buddy, Kip Perow (Airguns of Arizona's resident hunting guru), for a drive out to some of the large dairy farms for a bit of pest control. Besides the extensive populations of native animals, Arizona has seen an influx of non-indigenous species, sometimes occurring in absolutely mind-boggling numbers. Two such invasive pests are the feral pigeon and the Eurasian collared dove. In terms of population, the Eurasian doves are much more numerous, and cause greater losses, due to raids on feed and crops. There are a lot of pigeons as well, but the ratio is probably around 50:1 in favour of the

"Arizona has seen an influx of non-indigenous species, sometimes occurring in absolutely mind-boggling numbers"





"The largest dairy farm in the state providing us with unlimited birds to shoot!"

doves on most of the properties. I have travelled to more than 60 countries, and have seen feral pigeons in every one of them, but even though I view these birds as rats with wings, I have to admit a grudging respect for their ability to adapt and survive. On this particular property, they were roosting in sheds and feed barns where they were leaving behind an unhealthy mess, so partly for this reason, and partly on a whim, we'd decided to focus our attention on pigeons for the first shoot.

Kip is one of my favourite hunting partners; we've hiked the south-western deserts and mountains together, and he has joined me on a hunting trip to South Africa. I always enjoy spending time with another fanatical airgunner, but in the context of this trip, there were two other things he brought to the table; first we could pull any gun off the racks at AOA (Airguns of Arizona) and therefore have unfettered access to just about anything we'd want to

Above: Moving slowly is often enough to get yourself into range

shoot, and secondly, his sister and her husband own the largest dairy farm in the state, providing us with unlimited birds to shoot!

We've done many of these pest-control shoots in the past, and don't usually discriminate, taking both doves and pigeons. When taking both species, a couple of hundred birds in a 3-4 hour outing is the norm, and we generally try to set up shots at 40-80 yards, but will also reach out further on occasion. With consideration of the distance, wind, size of the birds, and the liberal use of body shots, we typically opt for either a .22 or .25 calibre rifle. My primary rifle was to be a Daystate Huntsman Classic in .22 that was set up to generate about 28 ft. lbs., although I also used an FX Whisper in .25, while Kip brought along his Daystate Air Wolf .25. We used JSB pellets for all guns; the 15.9 grains for the .22, and the 25.5 grains for the .25 calibre gun. Even though longer shots were anticipated, we didn't bother to carry shooting sticks

because we could shoot off the fences, hay bales, and other structures found in this agricultural setting.

On the lookout

The method we employed was to hike the borders of the stock pens and feed yards, using whatever structure was around to cover our approach. The birds would be found on the shed roofs, in the yards, or along the roads where the trucks dumped feed, ingesting massive quantities of grain. When shooting up on the shed roofs I like body shots for two reasons; first is that a bird hit in the chest would typically flop to the ground, rather than staying on the roof, before expiring, and secondly, it reduced the likelihood of a pass through, or missed shot fired into the air, from continuing onward. This type of shooting requires careful monitoring of backdrop, but ensuring that the pellets don't travel any further than is necessary is viewed as an added safety precaution; for birds on the ground we used headshots

Background: With almost unlimited food, the pigeon numbers can become huge

"In this short period of time, we managed to bag about 80 feral pigeons between the two of us"

as well.

As mentioned, camouflage clothing is not required, in my opinion. This mode of pest control requires you to be constantly on the move. These birds are accustomed to human traffic, and will tolerate it unless you get too close or they start to correlate your presence with their neighbours dropping down dead beside them. You do need to be circumspect; if the birds catch you moving directly toward them, they are gone, but in my experience, the way one dresses is not as important as hiding your approach. We'll shoot out to 100 yards if there is no wind, bringing the range in if it starts to blow. This is pure pest control, and we'll stay put clearing out every bird we can, moving to the next area when they get spooked. I'll take the 40-50-yard shot standing with the gun rested on a gate or leaning into a stacked bale of hay to steady myself, but if reaching out further, I prefer a sitting or prone position for a very stable rest.

When going out on a hunt where I may bag a few rabbits or squirrels, it's easier to relate a hunting story start to finish. When it's hours of non-stop shooting it's harder because the whole morning seems to blend into a single event. One thing I will note; it's not

good to be the only white or brown bird in the flock! Every time one of us was culling the flock, the oddly coloured birds were the first out. It was a confirmation of Darwin's views on natural selection - that genetic traits that are not advantageous to a species are not carried forward. Focusing on the pigeons had us moving more than usual; they were harder to sneak up on and took off after a shot or two. We did find that if shooting from a well-hidden spot 75 yards away, we might get two or three birds before the flock erupted into the air and wheeled away.

For the table

We sometimes gathered up the birds we shot, especially the doves which are great table fare, often keeping a few dozen for our own use and giving the rest to the farm workers. The pigeons aren't usually eaten, so as a rule, we only pick up the ones that are easy to get to. Otherwise the farm manager told us to use our time shooting, not doing pick up. They want the birds gone and are willing to do the clean up themselves. They do get some help from above - there are commonly hawks perched on telephone poles, in the trees, or soaring above, waiting to

Above: When disturbed they fly off but never fara

drop in to snatch a recently deceased pigeon or dove. When going into the yards to pick up birds, aggressive dairy cows have chased me out more than once, which always leaves me feeling a bit unmanned and resentful. For this reason alone, I am happy to leave the downed birds in situ; man I hate cows!

On this outing, we spent about three hours shooting before it became too hot to continue. If you've ever been in a very dry desert heat that sucks every bit of moisture from your body, you'll understand why we head in as the sun heads up. Yet, in this short period of time we managed to bag about 80 feral pigeons between the two of us. We left quite a few in the fields, but did collect those that fell within easy reach. This was undoubtedly a more challenging shoot, with lower numbers of birds in the bag than when we target the Eurasian doves, but because we have a commitment to remove as many birds as possible, we went back to taking the doves as well. Besides reducing numbers, the doves are great on the grill, and in a future article I'll take you on a dove hunt and share how we prepare them for the table. ■

Below left: The bag was starting to build nicely

Below right: My friend Kip has access to lots of shooting like this



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GURU TIP: If there's a chance of rain while you're shooting, put a dry rag in your car to dry the rifle with before you put the gun into its slip



Condensation will seek out areas not protected by oil, such as under the scope mounts

Q A friend found small surface rust spots appearing on his airgun over the course of last winter. Apart from regularly wiping gun oil onto the steel, are there any other precautions we can take to stop rust from forming? I don't want my own rifles going rusty!

A GURU SAYS: The clue to the most probable cause of rust forming on your friend's rifle is that it happened during the winter, and the culprit is temperature. Presuming that your friend was shooting outdoors in very cold conditions last winter, the

temperature of his rifle would fall as it acclimatised. The cold is not in itself a problem, as long as the rifle remains in cold and dry air, but sooner or later, the rifle will be moved into a warmer air environment, which could be inside a car during the journey home, or the air in the owner's house, and that's when the trouble starts.

The colder air is, the denser it is, which means that it cannot hold as much moisture as when warm. As temperature rises, the air becomes less dense, and is capable of holding more moisture. So when you turn the car heater on and the air warms,

moisture from your breath is able to be absorbed into the air and the humidity rises, and the same is true of the conditions inside a house.

When warm, moist air touches the cold steel of the rifle it is rapidly chilled, which makes it denser and squeezes out the moisture, which condenses onto the surface of the steel, and that's the cause of the rust on your friend's rifle. It's not just external surfaces that suffer condensation, either, because water will condense just as readily onto internal steel surfaces.

The solution to preventing condensation and consequent rust is very simple; when you finish any shooting session in cold temperatures, wipe any moisture from exposed surfaces, then place the rifle in a gun slip and make sure the zip is fastened fully to seal in the cold, dry, air and keep moist warm air out. Keep the rifle in its slip for two or three hours after taking it into a warmer and higher humidity environment, whether it's your car or house, which will give it plenty of time to warm up. When the rifle has acclimatised, it can safely be removed from the slip with absolutely no chance of moisture condensing onto it and causing rusting. ■



Old-style gun slips with fold-over ends can allow moist air in and allow rusting



The full-length zip allows cold, dry air to be sealed in, so the rifle can come up to room temperature and stay dry.

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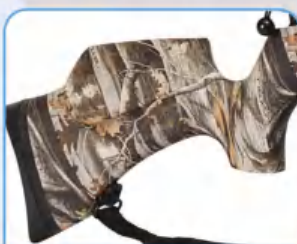


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SPEAKING SQUIRREL

Charlie Portlock takes us into the world of squirrel communication

Grey squirrels have a surprisingly complex communication system that is only recently becoming fully understood. It's essential that we're able to decipher their vocalisations, because this knowledge really can be the deciding factor in whether or not that pasty will be vegetarian friendly. For example, if

again feeding at your bait point. Understanding animal calls and alert responses should be an essential part of the hunter's toolkit, not only because it will lead to larger bags, but more importantly, because it enables us to immerse ourselves that bit further into the fascinating world of animal behaviour.

"This shouldn't be too much of a problem because grey squirrels have seemingly poor short-term memories"

you think you're moving undetected, the chances are that if you don't hear a 'kuk kuk kuk', then you're probably right; either that or you're wandering around in the pitch black when it's blowing a gale, neither of which are optimal squirrel hunting conditions. Equally, if you're tempted to break cover after an unproductive period of concealment and you hear a 'quaa moan', then sit tight because it means that the squirrel alert level has dropped and they'll soon be out

There are four main squirrel vocalisations:

The Kuk

'Look out! A predator is near!'

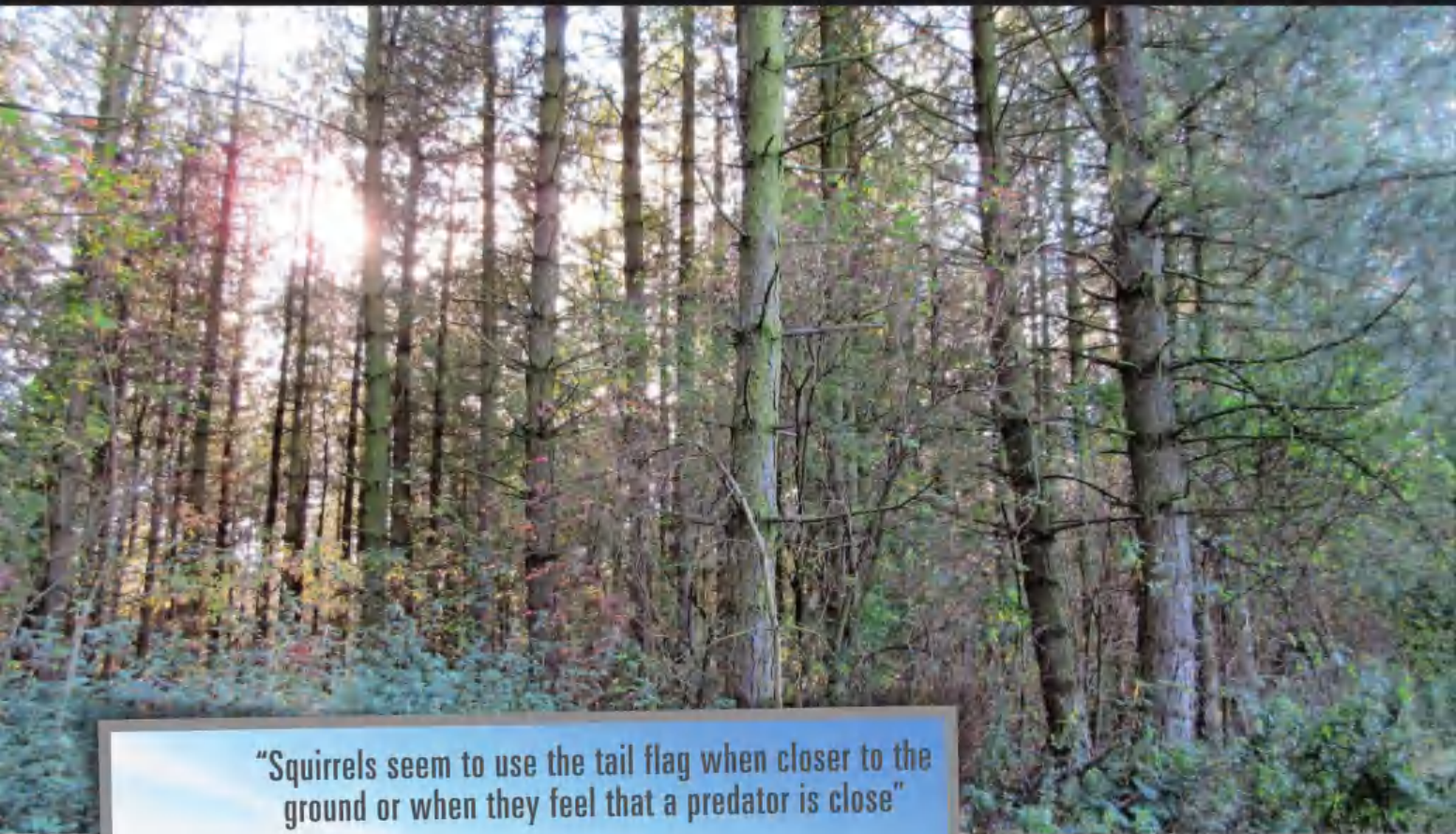
The kuk is a short, bark-like call normally delivered staccato fashion in rapid groups – 'kuk kuk kuk - kuk kuk' and if you've ever spent anytime moving stealthily through woodland, or even walking through parks for that matter, then you've probably heard it in action. Research suggests



Main: Squirrels can run up and down headfirst

Above: Wary and watching

that the kuk has two purposes; the first is to alert other squirrels that there is a dangerous predator close by, and the second is to let the predator know that it's been spotted. I've seen early-morning foxes abandon a hunt after they've heard this alarm, trotting off in search of less observant prey. For the air rifle hunter, it means that you've been seen. However, this shouldn't be too much of a problem because grey squirrels have seemingly poor short term memories and provided that you sit camouflaged and



"Squirrels seem to use the tail flag when closer to the ground or when they feel that a predator is close"



silent, they will normally resume their activity in anything from two to 20 minutes,

The Quaa

"I can still see the predator but it looks like it's leaving."

The quaa is essentially a longer kuk and is heard after the perceived threat level has dropped. The sound is somewhere in between a wet kiss and a disgruntled meow. You can hear something very close to this sound when you squeeze the trigger on a spray bottle of kitchen cleaner or some similar product. The quaa means that whatever you're doing - or not doing - is working and that you'll soon be trying to keep your cross hairs steady on your POA (point of aim).

The Quaa Moan

"I think the predator has gone but I'm

being loud to let it know that I've seen it, and I'm not coming down."

This is a very mournful sound, and the first time that I heard it was just after I'd taken a squirrel on a nearby trunk. It's quieter and less intense than the quaa but is so forlorn that I thought the other animal was expressing sorrow for the fallen. I know better now. It's quite unmistakeable and sounds a bit like a wet songbird's chirp followed by a soft meow. Its ventriloquial frequency characteristics make it quite hard to pinpoint its location, but it normally comes from high up and just out of range.

For the impatient hunter this is a good sound and means that you're well on the way to out-foxing your quarry, because they'll soon be returning to normal activity. If other vocalisations stop and you hear this sound, then it's likely that it will be business as usual

Above: I like to start my trip around three hours from sunset

Top: This woodland holds many grey squirrels

within ten minutes, normally much less.

The Muk-muk

"Feel not / Don't worry, I'm no threat and am only looking to mate."

The muk-muk - sometimes called a 'buzz' - sounds like a soft, stifled sneeze, a kind of gentle 'phfft, phfft'. It's a very quiet sound that nesting squirrels make to their mothers when demanding to be fed, but it's also used socially. As a hunter, you're most likely to encounter it as two animals chase each other around a tree; normally a male hoping to mate with a female. Essentially, it means 'Don't fear, I'm just looking to copulate'. This is a good sound for you to hear because it means the animals are relaxed and have no idea that you're there.

Physical display

Tail flicking and flagging also seem to form an important part of inter-squirrel communication, but this area is still under research. Tail-flagging is a pronounced waving of the erect tail, signals a high state of alarm and normally accompanies vocalisation. If you think you're unobserved and you see the tail flag then you've probably

been spotted, unless there's a fox sitting behind you, of course. In which case, well done!

Squirrels seem to use the tail flag when closer to the ground, or when they feel that a predator is close and a vocalisation might reveal their position. In this situation, the tail flag is an effective way to signal danger to other squirrels and is most often seen when the animal is clinging motionless, several feet up a trunk, trying to identify the exact direction of the threat before retreating higher. It also means that just because you can't hear any alarm calls it doesn't mean that you're undetected, and you may still have been spotted.

Tail flicking (or twitching) is a more controlled movement when a gentle quiver results in the tail describing a simple arc. This whole area is still under research, though, and the complexities of flagging and twitching are still being understood. For example, moans by themselves have been found to demonstrate alarm for aerial predators, and tail flags and quaa's for terrestrial threats. This is of interest to us as hunters because we can become a little careless once we know we've been seen, and that's the whole idea behind squirrel alarm vocalisations; 'Give up, we know that you're there.' It's crucial to look and listen if you want to know exactly what squirrels are alarmed about - it might not be you!

Tail flagging, accompanied by



Left: Is it white bryony? I think it is.

Right: Periods of rain provide good tracking conditions

vocalisations is indicative of a very high state of alarm. So if you witness this behaviour and still think that you're some kind of beech wood shinobi, then perhaps it's time to work a bit harder on stealth. Most animals use interspecific signals that are appropriately interpreted by many species. For example, the distress call of a jay can cause a suspicious squirrel to scamper to safety, and likewise, the kuk can cause a jay to take flight. Most alarm and distress calls have a universal meaning because they conform to common patterns that most animals are innately aware of. The most obvious ones I encounter in woodland are given by crowing cock pheasants, or most infuriatingly, by woodpigeons whose clattering flight can send greys back up the trunk and into deeper foliage.

Below: Two is more than enough



In the field

As I normally stalk through woodland after squirrels, I thought I'd try something different and set up under cover, about 20 yards from a very popular oak tree. I still moved quietly into position because being careless of noise and movement always seems counter-productive. As I sat down with my back against a beech tree, I knew I'd succeeded in keeping the area relatively calm because although the squirrels moved away from the ground and stopped moving around, they weren't exactly sure what I was and so remained silent with no obvious tail flagging.

However, I made the classic mistake of not getting comfortable enough when I first sat down and my search for a better position led to a slip and a snapping twig that startled a cock pheasant nearby, and sent a young squirrel into a frenzy of kuks. Slightly annoyed with myself, I settled into a good position and waited for about five minutes for the sound to die away completely, before a pause and couple of minutes of quaa moaning told me that things were calming down again. As a fairly impatient hunter, I find that an intimate knowledge of animal behaviour can really help me to remain focused and positive because I'm more aware of how long it might take for the next shot to present itself. Within 10 minutes of my initial mistake, I took one animal on the ground with a clean headshot and another on the trunk of the oak about five minutes later; more than ample meat for a hearty pie. With leaves and beech mast gathering on the woodland floor, we can now all look forward to the true beginning of a bountiful season of squirrel shooting, so when you look up, try to listen in, too. Good hunting! ■

"It's crucial to look and listen if you want to know exactly what squirrels are alarmed about"



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KEEP IT CLEAN

The Editor talks us through some basic airgun maintenance

Recently, I've had a number of emails from new readers asking about how to look after their airguns. This article isn't going to go into depth about how to service your gun - that's Neil Price's territory; this is more day-to-day maintenance that can be applied to keep the rifle in top condition. I strongly advise regular servicing by a professional gunsmith to ensure top performance and to maximise the longevity of your expensive investment. When experienced eyes view your gun's internals they learn a lot, and are able to catch and correct problems early before they cause a failure or drop in performance.

Whenever you finish shooting, it's wise to wipe down all metal surfaces with a lightly oiled cloth to remove dirt and the grease, and salts that your fingers have left from handling. An even better choice is a silicone-impregnated cloth. Again, this

Right: The felt wad can be inserted in the muzzle and pushed through with a cleaning rod

Below: Although WD40 isn't a good gun lube it's ideal for cleaning magazines

Bottom: You don't need much to keep your rifle in top condition



removes the dirt and then leaves behind a thin film of silicone that protects the metal from corrosion whilst giving a nice, satin sheen. Blued steel can rust very easily, so take care of it.

Dry up

When your gun gets really wet, such as during a day out in heavy rain, getting it fully dry is vital. I like to keep a dry, clean, grit-free rag in the car with which I remove as much water as possible before putting the rifle in its slip. When I get home, I remove the stock and go about removing any further visible water with kitchen towel before leaving the gun in a warm room to air dry. Don't be tempted to put a wooden stock on a radiator because getting too hot could damage it. It's much better to let remaining moisture evaporate away slowly.

Before reassembling, wipe all the metal surfaces over with your oily

cloth, leaving a layer of protection behind. Areas that can't be accessed without dismantling need all the protection they can get. For the same reason, it's a good idea to remove your scope, including its mounts, and apply some oil or light grease to the areas that you cannot otherwise clean. Finally, a drop of light oil in the heads of Allen bolts will prevent them from rusting, too.

Guns with oiled wooden stocks need some care from time to time in the form of a light application of walnut oil. The correct technique is to pour a drop into the palm of your hand



"Whenever you finish shooting it's wise to wipe down all metal surfaces with a lightly oiled cloth"





Left: Wiping all the metal surfaces with an oil or silicone cloth should be done every time you shoot

Right: A small box of wads lasts a long time. Please note the rod is plastic coated to protect the rifling



and then work it in circles all over the stock until your hand becomes quite warm. The heat helps the oil to be absorbed. Then stand the stock somewhere to dry fully, preferably overnight. The oil seals moisture out and nourishes the wood. It doesn't

"Users of pre-charged pneumatics should have the mantra, 'be keen, keep it clean'"

need to be done often, but keep an eye on the surface so that if you see any signs of dryness you can react swiftly.

Hot topic

Cleaning the gun's barrel is a topic that gets a lot of people hot under the collar, but it needn't be a worry. The simple rule is, 'it only needs cleaning if and when the rifle's accuracy isn't as good as it was', but before you blame the barrel, check that all the nuts and bolts on the stock and scope mounts are tight, because these are just as likely to be the cause of inaccuracy. I prefer to use felt wads, rather than cloth patches, because you buy them by calibre and they're the perfect fit straight away. I also keep a few in my gun slip so that they can be used to dry a barrel that's been out in the rain.

My cleaning method is simple. I soak a couple of wads in light gun oil and push them through with a cleaning rod. Then I keep pushing dry ones through until they come out clean. This ensures that you won't damage the delicate rifling that's so vital to accuracy. In my experience, it isn't necessary to use a metal bore brush to get an airgun barrel clean. The lead alloy used in pellets is easily removed, so the aggressive nature of a phosphor bronze brush is unnecessary and potentially damaging. The steel alloy used to make airgun barrels is relatively soft and can be scratched by another metal, so be kind to your barrel and it will last a long time.

Users of pre-charged pneumatics should have the mantra, 'be keen,

keep it clean', because the number one problem people cause to their guns is to allow dirt and grit to get inside. When you flow high-pressure air through the filling port, any dust or grit is driven inside, where it can damage the delicate mechanism. Much of the sealing work is done by small 'O' rings which are soft and vulnerable to cutting. Once damaged, they'll soon leak and the gun will lose pressure, so because of this you should keep the connectors spotlessly clean and use the cover, cap or collar to keep it that way. If your gun doesn't have these are specialist manufacturers who can sell you one.

The same cleanliness applies to magazines. They're quite delicate

and don't appreciate having mud and muck inside their moving parts, and they're best kept in a clean pouch until needed. Should you make one dirty, make every effort to clean it fully, but don't dismantle it unless you really know what you're doing. Inside some magazines you'll find small parts and springs, which once lost means that the mag won't work. It's best to brush away as much dirt as you can and then blast away any other contamination with a can of good old WD40. Keep spraying until the mag is spotless, allow it to dry, and it will be as good as new - and lightly lubricated in the process. Don't pour sticky gun oil into mags though because dust and grit will stick to it.

Finally, remember that the best maintenance is applied little and often, then you'll have a clean, reliable gun. ■

Below: Just a drop of walnut oil now and then will keep the moisture out of your stock



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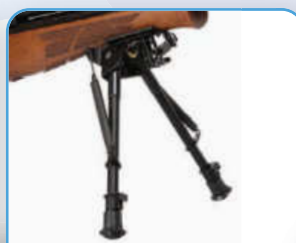
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YOU CAN WIN!

For many of us the ultimate airgun is a break-barrel springer and this month you can win one



ENTRY FORM

This is a snippet from a picture printed elsewhere in this issue. Can you spot which page it's on?



I've spotted the shot on page...

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HOW TO ENTER

By Post

Check out the jigsaw piece printed on the entry form below and see if you can spot from which main photo elsewhere in this edition it has been taken. When you have found the full picture, write down the page number on which it appears in the answer box below and send your completed entry form to the address at the bottom of the page. Entry costs just £1.50 per go - cheque and postal orders payable to Air Gunner - and you can enter as many times as you like. As a bonus though, for every five entries you submit, you get another one free - i.e. six entries for £7.50

Closing date for entries is Tuesday 22nd of January one entry free provided the entry form is submitted with a validated 'Free Competition entry' token from their membership pack. Multiple entries allowed. If you do not wish to destroy your copy of the magazine you can send your entry on a separate piece of paper. Photocopies are also allowed. In the event of a tie, all correct entries will be put into a hat and there will be a draw to decide the winner. Prize is supplied on behalf of Air Gunner by the manufacturer. The prize will be sent to the winner's designated gun shop which may levy an administration charge for handling.

COMBI SAW

The editor tries a neat solution to hide making

One of the few things I remember about my late father was when he looked me in the eyes and told me that the man who invented the saw had made the axe redundant. As a research engineer, he explained about effort given for

cutting blade - like you'd have in a hacksaw - together with a more coarse blade that works well on bone, as I found out whilst butchering a roe deer that I'd culled. The blades are replaceable when they wear, so the long-term use of the saw is

Right: Three different blades are stored safely in the frame

"I challenged it with wet and dry wood, thicknesses varying from 1" to about 4", and it sliced through with minimal effort"

reward taken; a saw removes just the minimum of wood to complete the cut, whilst an axe has to chop out a big 'V' to achieve the same result. Despite his wisdom, I've always carried an axe for hide making because small folding saws aren't man enough, and a small axe is easy to carry.

What if you could have a 17" saw that folded down to the size of a stick? Swedish manufacturer, EKA, has answered this call with their amazing Combi saw. Folded, it takes almost no space in a backpack, and yet opened out and locked it's a rigid and effective saw. The razor-sharp blade is stored inside a long, metal tube where it can't damage anything, and in the same slot, EKA fits a metal



Left: Once folded it fitted into my backpack easily and safely



Main pic: Despite its modest size it cuts logs like this in seconds



guaranteed.

At just 360 grammes complete, the Combi is impressively light and tucked down the side of a daypack, I hardly knew it was there, but that wouldn't matter if it didn't cut well. I challenged it with wet and dry wood, thicknesses varying from 1" to about 4", and it sliced through with minimal effort. The woodsaw tooth profile is very aggressive, cutting a broad channel that helps to clear sawdust and reduce sticking in sappy wood. Clearly, it's not intended to cut 12" thick logs, though - that's a job for a much bigger bow saw.

It's a very versatile tool because of the three blades, and that makes it a good thing to keep in the boot of your car. All sorts of small cutting jobs could be done around your hunting permission with the choice of blades. I helped my farmer friend to cut out some fence wire that had caught in a machine, saving him time by not going back to the yard to get a hacksaw - that earned me a few brownie points along the way. Perhaps my dad was right - I'll leave the axe at home and take this great little saw instead.

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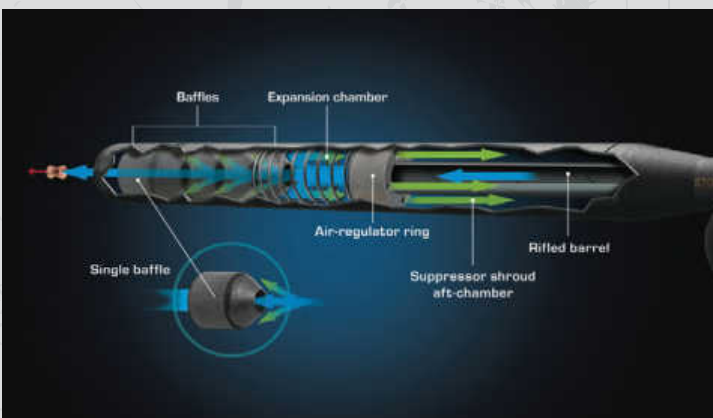
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GOLDEN TICKET GIVEAWAY!

As you may have seen in the news this month, world-leading airgun manufacturer, Air Arms, has just announced a fantastic free competition. Air Arms is rightly proud of its Sussex-based manufacturing headquarters, and even more so about what goes on there, and to celebrate both it's planning to throw open the company's doors to 10 lucky airgunners on the 2nd of February 2016!

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

Air Arms is giving away five golden tickets, each admitting two people, for a full day's exploration of the company HQ, including the manufacturing processes, rifle building, and a no-holds-barred question and answer session with the Air Arms team, plus some top lunchtime scoff and a glorious goody bag stuffed with over a hundred quid's worth of Air Arms kit.

As you can see, winning a golden ticket gives you and a friend of your choice the airgun opportunity of a lifetime; all you have to do is get yourself to Hailsham in Sussex, and watch in wonder as your great day unfolds!

Fancy a fantastic day out at the Air Arms factory? Of course you do!



It's going to be an occasion that will live in the memory forever, and your chance of winning one of those golden tickets is waiting for you as soon as you turn this page. Don't do that yet, though, because here's what's waiting for those golden ticket winners.

THE GRAND TOUR

The winners will meet the Air Arms team at 09.30 on Tuesday the 2nd of February next year, so make sure you're free on that day because you really won't want to miss this one.

After meeting the team and enjoying a quick refreshment, the winners will set off on a guided tour of the Air Arms machine shop. This is where bar stock and other raw materials meet the hi-tech influence of CNC machinery, plus just the right amount of traditional engineering skills, to create and finish the components from which Air Arms' world-beating rifles are made.

It's an incredible journey and you'll see those famous airguns take shape before your very eyes. You'll pause for lunch and a chat at 12.30, before moving on to the

second phase of the tour.

IF YOU BUILD IT ... THEY WILL COME

After lunch, you'll get an exclusive behind the scenes look at the various stages of assembly that take place before each rifle is tested, calibrated and tested again. Each model has its own dedicated gunsmith who knows every nut, bolt, washer and seal that combine to make some of the finest air rifles in the world. Just watch it all come together and ask as many questions as you like, because this opportunity is a genuine once-in-a-lifetime chance to find out the full inside story of the Air Arms range.

AND FINALLY ...

After the assembly shop tour, you'll all meet up for more refreshments and a question-and-answer session, before collecting your goody bags and saying farewell to the factory and the Air Arms team. Your head will be spinning by now, but what a truly amazing day you'll have had.

Now, turn this page, get that entry form in by the 13th of January next year, and keep those fingers crossed. Good luck! ■



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Please enter me and a companion in to the free prize draw to win an exclusive behind the scenes tour at Air Arms HQ on **Tuesday 2nd Feb 2016**.

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone No..... Date of birth.....

The rifles I currently own are.....

Do you or your companion have any special dietary requirements; YES NO

Do you or your companion have any other special requirements; YES..... NO



The draw will take place on Friday 15/01/2016. All winning entries will be notified either by telephone or email. All winners will be announced on Air Arms social media and in Airgun World. This prize draw is in conjunction with Airgun World, only original tickets will be accepted. Any winning entrants under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult at all times. All winning entrants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements. Please complete and return your golden ticket no later than 13.01.2016 to AIR ARMS, 5&6 HAILSHAM INDUSTRIAL PARK, DIPLOCKS WAY, HAILSHAM, EAST SUSSEX, BN27 3JF.
GOOD LUCK!

On my previous reconnaissance trip to the paddock, I had identified a potential ambush position in the top left-hand corner between the hedge line and the fence. It offered a clear view of the entire paddock and, in particular, the hedge line from where the rabbits would emerge. A large pile of earth at the far end of the paddock provided a safe backstop, and by using my laser rangefinder I was able to measure this as being 300 metres away from my firing position, so I felt confident that any shot I took from my ambush position would be safe.

One of the challenges of air rifle hunting is that our quarry species, such as rabbits, crows and pigeons, are very unlikely to wait around while we get within shooting range. They use their highly tuned senses to avoid

predators on a daily basis, and that's what helps them to do such a good job of evading air rifle hunters. To achieve a humane kill with a sub-12 ft.lb air rifle requires that quarry is shot at relatively close range. Good reconnaissance can help address this challenge by identifying where to find your quarry and helping you to pre-select an ambush site.

With any ambush there will inevitably be a wait for the countryside to settle down after the disturbance caused by the arrival of the hunter. The waiting time for the rabbits to reappear on my permission varies from 20 minutes to an hour, and during this waiting period it is important to keep any movement to an absolute minimum. The best way to do this is to make sure your firing position is comfortable, and

that any equipment you need, such as a rangefinder, is close to hand. Experience has taught me that there is nothing worse than lying or sitting for two or three hours on cold, damp, Cambridgeshire earth, because any moisture in the ground will soak through my trousers and into my underwear. It doesn't make for a comfortable hunting session, and repeated soakings can lead to Farmer Giles becoming an unwelcome hunting buddy. This situation can be avoided by using a waterproof groundsheet, or an FT-type beanbag to sit on. My beanbag only cost about £20, and is filled with polystyrene chips so it is light enough to be attached to the back of my rucksack, with a karabiner.

Rabbit damage

With the FX Cyclone, Hawke

Main: Resting on the tripod my aim was rock steady

Right: Here's my new Hawke lamping system ready to fit

BACK IN THE PADDOCK



"The waiting time for the rabbits to reappear on my permission varies from 20 minutes to an hour"

"There are always going to be debates about the ethics of killing of young animals"

Sidewinder combination set up on the tripod, shooting sticks and my laser rangefinder close to hand, I settled down to await the appearance of the rabbits. They had burrowed under the fence that runs down the left-hand side of the paddock, leaving the classic signs of rabbit damage behind them, and a quick check with the rangefinder showed that the closest area of damage was 25 metres away from my firing point.

After about five minutes, a small rabbit emerged through the fence at approximately ten metres away from me. There are always going to be debates about the ethics of killing of young animals, but I believe my role is to carry out pest control in as professional a manner as possible,

and let's not forget that small rabbits grow into the large rabbits that cause damage in the countryside. I gently squeezed the trigger of the FX Cyclone and the small rabbit gave a couple of flips then rolled over, quite dead.

Humane hunting distance

Having made a good start, and as I waited for the countryside to settle down - and the appearance of the next rabbit - my attention was drawn to movement further down the fence line. Sitting in a patch of long grass was another rabbit, bigger than the one I had just shot. My rangefinder has 6x magnification so I was able to watch the rabbit and see how far away from me it was. At 43 metres, it

was beyond my self-imposed, humane hunting distance of 25 metres, and the complete lack of cover in the paddock meant that stalking closer to it was not a realistic option. I will admit that I found the situation quite frustrating, but the place to practise my long-range shooting is at my club, Midlands Marksmen, not in the field and on live quarry.

My feelings of frustration did not decrease when the rabbit jumped back into the hedgerow, leaving me with an empty paddock to look at. Time definitely began to drag as I waited for something to happen, and after what seemed like an hour, but was in fact only ten minutes, the rabbit emerged approximately 25 metres away from me. I wasted no time in bringing the cross hairs of the scope onto the rabbit's head. I settled them on the area between the bottom of the ear and its eye, and a gentle

1: Once on the gun the weight is barely noticeable

2: It's a lot to carry but every piece has a function

3: I believe my rangefinder is vital to success



squeeze of the trigger sent the Air Arms pellet on its way.

Gymnastics

The rabbit did a backflip and disappeared into the dense undergrowth at the bottom of the hedge, and I could hear it thrashing around. Was this just its death throes, or had I wounded it and left it agony? I reloaded the rifle and walked purposefully toward the spot where the rabbit had disappeared, with the intention of administering a mercy shot if necessary, but the dense undergrowth made the rabbit difficult to see, and the size of the mesh in the fence made it virtually impossible to get my arm through. When I did manage to push my hand through the fence, my shooting gloves offered no protection against the thorns and thistles in the undergrowth. As I forced my breathing rate down and

Background: With a large rabbit population in the paddock things look good

4: Some basic back garden testing has already got me excited

5: Success and dinner

6: Clean kills mean everything to me

tried to remain calm and focused, the rabbit stopped thrashing around, so satisfied that the rabbit was dead, I then attempted to recover its body from the undergrowth. This proved to be very difficult because the rabbit's body was in the middle of a clump of nettles and thistles, almost beyond my arm's reach, but I decided

"The rabbit did a backflip and disappeared into the dense undergrowth"

to 'man up' and ignore the prickly undergrowth as I grabbed the rabbit's back legs. Another lesson learned; I needed to get a sturdier pair of gardening-type gloves and keep them in my rucksack for my next trip to the paddock.

My success in hunting in the paddock has meant that I now have permission to start lamping there, and to coincide with this, Deben

have sent me their top-of-the-range LEDRay F600 Gunlight kit to try out. My first impressions are that this is an absolutely brilliant piece of kit; it quite literally contains everything you need to go lamping, in a plastic, tool-style case. The torch does not rely on coloured filters that may reduce the illumination;

instead it has four different coloured LEDs - white, red, blue and green. The kit contains a battery charger, rechargeable battery, the F600 torch, an AC mains charger, stock mounted switch, a mounting system which fits both 1-inch and 30mm scopes, and a 2-inch snood to reduce glare from the rifle barrel. I'll tell you about my first lamping trip with the F600 next time. ■



DAYSTATE HUN

This month Neil works on a pre-charged pneumatic and gives us some warnings

This lovely old Daystate Huntsman PCP air rifle was brought to me because it would not hold compressed air at all. It had been stored in the back of a wardrobe for many, many years and had only just come to light again. The owner was hoping that something could be done with it because he had owned it for a long time, and now that he had rediscovered it, he wanted it to be made into a 'shooter' again.

Before starting any work on a PCP gun, for your own safety, make sure that the air cylinder is completely empty. This can be done now by dry-firing the rifle until it is empty, or later on in the process by depressing the firing valve to evacuate the cylinder.

1 The first thing to do is to remove the action from the stock - not as easy as it sounds. On this model, the fixings are imperial, not metric, so I had to go digging into the dark depths of my toolboxes to find imperial measurement, hexagon drive keys that would fit. Remove the single hexagon, drive cap head screw from the underside of the stock and lift the stock clear of the action. Place the stock somewhere out of the way to keep it safe from damage.

2 Loosen the three grub-screws from around the barrel clamp and pull the clamp from the end of the barrel and air cylinder.

3 Push out the cross pin that retains the trigger assembly. Be sure to find the trigger tension spring.

4 Push out the cross pin that retains the trigger lever assembly. Be sure to find the trigger lever tension spring.

5 Push out the cross pin that retains the hammer sear

assembly. Be sure to find the hammer sear tension spring.

6 Loosen the two small grub-screws, one on each side of the air cylinder end cap. Hold a finger over the end of the end cap as it is under tension from the hammer spring.

7 Release the hammer spring tension on the end cap with your fingers and withdraw the end cap, hammer spring and hammer.

8 With a small, flat-blade screwdriver, unscrew the guide peg from the pellet probe shaft and then withdraw the pellet probe and cocking handle.

9 Unscrew the pillar nut from the bottom of the action.

10 With a flat-blade screwdriver, remove the brass stud from the bottom of the action.

11 With a hexagon drive key through the two holes in the top of the breech block, loosen the two screws that hold the breech and barrel assembly onto the air cylinder. Note the transfer port 'O' ring.

12 Remove the filler end cap.

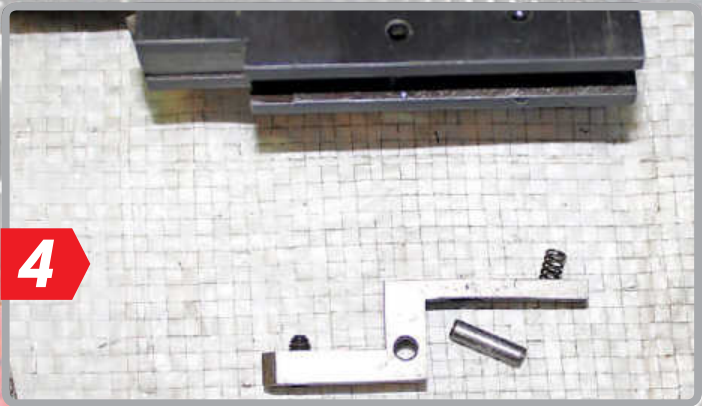
13 Remove the three countersunk head, hexagon drive set screws that hold the firing valve assembly in the air cylinder.

14 With a suitable sized pin punch and hammer, drive out the firing valve assembly cross pin.

15 The complete firing valve assembly can now be pushed out of the air cylinder.

New seals were fitted and the firing valve assembly refitted into the air cylinder and the cross pin and three retaining screws fitted.

16 A new 'O' ring was fitted onto the filler end cap and



TSMAN



new Dowty seals put on the quickfill valve and screwed into the cylinder.

17 Now would be a good time to fill with CO₂ before any more reassembly work is done. The cylinder was filled to 180 bar pressure and then left over the weekend.

After the two-day waiting period, the pressure in the air cylinder had dropped to 100 bar, so we are still not holding pressure.

18 Time to dunk it in water then, and we have bubbles. On closer examination, it was seen that the bubbles were coming from one place only, and that was from around the end of the firing valve. This means that a new firing valve is required.

19 On the telephone, I spoke to a very pleasant and helpful young lady at Daystate. After I had explained what I was after and whilst on the phone to me, she walked into the stores and found a new firing valve and spring in stock, and two days later they landed through my letterbox.

20 The air cylinder had to be stripped down again and the firing valve removed. The back of the firing valve was unscrewed and the old firing valve and spring removed. The internal seal face was cleaned and the new firing valve and spring inserted and the end cap replaced. Again a new 'O' ring seal was put on the firing valve body and on the filler-valve cap. I only use 'O' rings once; it is false economy to do otherwise.

I rebuilt the air cylinder and again filled it to 180 bar pressure. This time there were no bubbles issuing from either end of the air cylinder. The rest of the rifle can now be rebuilt which is just a reverse of the stripping procedure, but making sure that the new transfer port 'O' ring is properly located between the breech block and the air cylinder.

I again checked the pressure in the air cylinder, four days after completing the rebuild, and there was nil loss of pressure, so we have done what the owner wanted; we have made this into a 'shooter' again.



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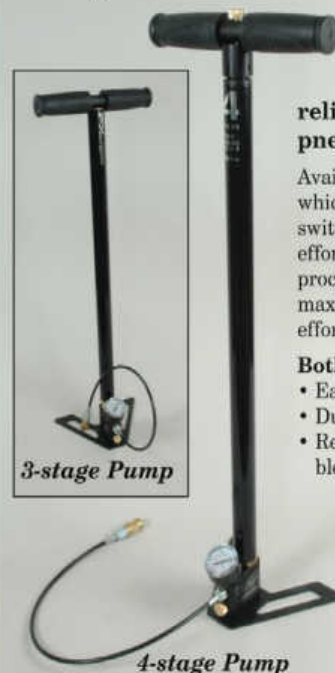
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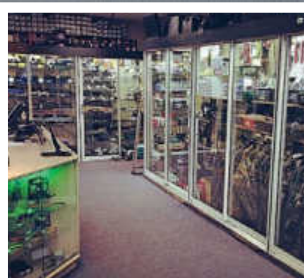
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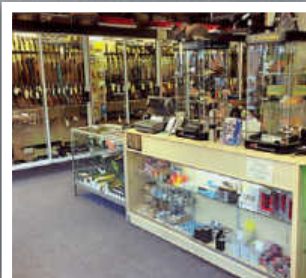
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"These boots have been my go-to HFT boots for the past three years"

the upper. There is also a Hydroguard membrane for further waterproofing and a fully padded tongue that is attached to the full height of the boot. The solid construction of these boots makes them a real joy to wear. Jack Pyke states that the boots have been designed with an extra-strong heel structure designed to prevent over-pronation of the foot. (i.e. foot turning inward). This design helps the foot to feel planted when walking on uneven surfaces, and from a shooting point of view it helps you to get a stable platform for standing shots. They also come with a Vibram sole and this hardwearing material makes the Hunters last and last.

The Hunters are a winter boot, but because I'm tight-fisted I have used them all through the summer and apart from stinking feet at the end of the day, they have been fine. To be honest, they have been perfect. The soles are still good and as you can see in the picture, the tread has hardly worn down; the leather is still supple and waterproof, and wearing them is like putting your feet in butter. The Hunters are not only my go-to boot for shooting, but if I have a long day walking around London or even a

A BRITISH INSTITUTION

Gary Chillingworth gives us his long-term review of some hard-working shooting kit

One of the things I love about working for Air Gunner is the opportunity to review and test products; the chance to get hold of a piece of kit and not have to worry about keeping it fresh and clean, about damaging a nice new pair of boots or, God forbid, ripping a £200 jacket and incurring the wrath of she who must be obeyed. Yes, I love to break things and only by using items for a long time, can you really see how good they are.

Back in 2012 and 2013 respectively, Jack Pyke allowed me to test their new Hunter boots and Countryman wellingtons. At the time, they passed all my tests and I was happy to wear

them, but it is now three years later for the Hunters and two years for the wellingtons, so let's see how they have fared.

Firstly, the Hunters: These have been my go-to HFT boots for the past three years; they have been worn almost every weekend and have been used and abused. I have occasionally cleaned them, but they have never been dubbined, and apart from the occasional blast of Febreze by my wife, they have remained untouched since day one.

The boots are made from full-grain leather and have a high rubber band to make sure that there is no ingress of water where the sole attaches to

Main: Despite getting used almost every day my wellies are still in good condition

hard day at work, these are the boots I always use. Even when I went to Disneyland last year my Hunters were attached to my feet and, unlike the rest of the family, my tootsies were happy all day.

I have recommended the Hunters to all my friends, and when you look around the HFT circuit, you'll see that they are very popular boots and I have no hesitation in recommending them to you.

Hunter boots RRP £89.95

Countryman wellingtons.

Two years ago, I had an email from a reader who wanted to know if wellingtons could be used for HFT, ➔



"When you pull the boots on, your feet feel cosseted and warm"

on the gate and because of the cleat design, any mud or gunge that has accumulated on the sole drops off.

The Countrymans grip your calf very well and because of this you can walk for miles and miles without the worry of blisters, but if you have big calves like me, spend £4 on eBay and get a boot-jack, which will help you to get your boots off without you getting your hands dirty.

At shoots where the weather is going to be very wet, or there has been heavy snow on the ground, I use the Countrymans for HFT and they are brilliant - warm and supportive and have great levels of grip. Over the last two years, there have been no serious issues. The only small problem was a slight discoloration of the rubber, but this is only cosmetic and was caused by me not cleaning them after getting them very dirty. I also recommend a drop of oil on the zip every now and then. The Countrymans are everything you could want from a wellington and will last and last.

Countryman wellingtons RRP £65

Jack Pyke 3 in 1 jacket and trousers

Last weekend, I bumped into a couple of old friends, John and Jack

so, once again, I called Glenn at Jack Pyke and a pair of Countrymans arrived on my doorstep.

The boots themselves are everything that you would expect from a high-quality piece of kit. They have a 3mm neoprene lining and a removable innersole to help with drying if water gets over the top of this full-height wellington boot. Neoprene is fantastic stuff. It's what wetsuits are made from and as one of the best insulators on the market today, it is also inherently flexible and comfortable, so when you pull the boot on, your feet feel cosseted and warm and even though a wellie will not give you the same amount of support as a lace-up boot, these Countrymans make my ankles feel supported and secure.

The boots have a full-length waterproof zip on the side, made by YKK - one of the best zip manufacturers around. When I first got the boots, I wondered how you could waterproof a zip. Well, the answer is, you can't, but sitting behind the zip is a full-length gusset, and essentially the zip is only there to tighten the boot around your calf, so it doesn't matter if the water gets through the zip - it will never get to your leg.

I have used these boots almost every day because they are also my dog-walking boots. I live in darkest Essex and running next to my house is the Essex Way. Every day, my hound, Clara, and I stride off into the country and as the ground is mainly made of clay, the dog comes home in a filthy state. I have never had an issue, though. I give the boots a tap

Above: The soles are wearing very well

Below: My boots have survived all kinds of mud and muck





Right: A boot jack was a great investment

Left: The gusset behind the zip ensures no leakage



Houghton. These two reprobates were shooters at Cambridge, back when I started to shoot in 2007. In 2010, Jack was about 13 years old and was well on his way to becoming a top shot, so with this in mind, I spoke to Jack Pyke and they agreed to supply him with one of their 3 in 1 jacket and trouser combos. When I saw Jack at Emley Moor HFT shoot, he was a foot taller, but was still wearing the same suit sent out all those years ago.

At the time, the jacket was massive on him and the trousers had to be taken up, but now, they fit him perfectly. Jack told me that even after all this time they are still waterproof, although they had been coated with Nikwax a few years back. He said that the secret of keeping them in great condition is to wash them only when you have to, and never to use fabric softener or harsh cleaners. He told me that they had been used for hunting every week for five years and apart from the odd rip from barbed wire, they were still

in great condition. He did say that the crotch was starting to go on the trousers, but I chose to take his word for that, because poking around a young man's nether regions is not for me.

3 in 1 combo RRP £95

Jack Pyke equipment is great value for money and unlike some of the cheaper kit on the market, if you look after it, it will last and last –

even if you abuse it, it will still last a long time. I believe in standing by what I review and I can assure you that when my Hunters die and go to shoe heaven – well, they do have soles – they will be replaced with a new pair, and my wellingtons will probably be handed down to my son one day. Jack Pyke is a great British company and on top of that it is run by nice people, so if you are in the market for any new kit, please give Jack Pyke your consideration.

For more information contact Jack Pyke at www.jackpyke.com or see their products at all good gun shops. ■

“Jack told me that even after all this time they are still waterproof”



Right: That's better. It fits him now

Left: The suit was huge on him all those years ago and is still going strong today



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LAST OF THE WILD WEEKENDS



Jamie Chandler gets away from it all on his hunting permission

A few years ago, without the responsibilities you gather as you wander through your 20s, a wild weekend would have involved 10 mates, a ridiculous amount of disposable cash, hefty drinking, and ideally, waking up in a different country or at the very least, county. Proof of this is the fact that I once had a quiet night in a pub in Knebworth, Hertfordshire, near where I used to live, and I'm now married and living in Hampshire having woken up the next morning in a student house in Southampton!

These days, an ideal wild weekend involves something much less rowdy, but as utterly life affirming as you could wish. With an unseasonably warm spell at the beginning of

October, the chance to get out on my main permission for possibly the last of this year's wild weekends was upon me.

To me, a wild weekend isn't just about camping out, but actually reconnecting with the real meaning of hunting; it's a chance to experience a tiny bit of what it means to rely on your hunting skills in order to eat. It's utter escapism, but if you are considering something similar, please ensure that you seek permission from the landowner and agree expectations. Camping out, or a fire, may seem harmless to you, but could get your permission withdrawn quicker than a Greek finance minister's

salary from a bank, if the landowner disagrees.

Travelling light

On these forays I try to travel light. I'm not a bushcraft person or anything quite so skilled, so I have a 'cheap as chips' pop-up tent, sleeping bag and air mat, a trusty Trangia stove, a few bits like coffee, tin of chopped tomatoes, pasta, and on this occasion, pitta bread, mushrooms, some eggs and a couple of other odds and sods that were going off; gas lamp, water and most importantly, bog roll and antibacterial washing up liquid. I once forgot the bog roll and never, ever have since! Obviously rifle and pellets are a prerequisite and this time it was my R10 and AA Fields because the massive shot

Above : Patience rewarded. A rabbit in my sights

Below : Only one pigeon but enough for my dinner



count meant that I shouldn't need to refill over a weekend out hunting.

I arrived later than expected, on a Friday evening with under two hours until sundown, so I threw up a camp in about 10 minutes, checked my zero, and headed straight off to find a pigeon – or more if I was lucky – for a quick and easy dinner. I usually arrive to ambush pigeons in plenty of time, but sometimes you just have to make the best of it. As I headed into a spinney and toward a favoured roost, 15 or so pigeons smashed their way from treetops to the sky, in panic at being disturbed, and were gone. I was hoping that a few might circle round and head back in, but after 20 minutes I realised it wasn't to be.

With the light dying and the possibility of egg with pitta soldiers for dinner, I thought I'd give it another 15 minutes before at least trying for a rabbit for the next day, and as I got up to leave, three pigeons clattered into the oak above me, but none presented a clear shot through the still dense leaf canopy. I waited, on my haunches as my legs went to sleep, too concerned to stretch in case I scared off dinner. The grey pests

crashed around above me, with all the grace of a body-builder's ballet act, having a last minute gorge on the acorns before settling down for the night, and then a fourth bird came into the trees and landed 25 yards away, looking straight at me.

In the gloom at the bottom of the spinney, I moved as slowly and gently on to one knee as I could and, still undetected, raised the R10, slipped the safety off and sent a big AA Field kiss straight toward the target. The pigeon fell without a flap and the impact sent its colleagues toward safer roosts in a panicked tizz – dinner had arrived! On inspection, I noticed that the pellet had missed its head, but hit the boiler room dead centre, which would explain the falling without a flap. A quick de-breast and back to my camp with a bounce in my step to enjoy tonight's dinner of field-fresh, seared pigeon breast with mushrooms in pitta – far better than an egg sandwich. With dinner done, a brew, and some quality stargazing in an area of little light pollution, I turned in and slept like a baby.

After a cold wash and a lazy breakfast of fried eggs in pitta and

some beans on the Saturday morning, I was going to have a bit of a plink, but ended up helping the farm manager and the farm's shooting rights holder take down some barbed wire fencing to create a beetle bank. Although unplanned, it always pays to help out when you can because it cements positive relations and can lead to more opportunities. A few hours later, with

Below: The most important thing; the kettle ready for a brew

Bottom: I got on to one knee for the shot as slowly as I could



"I ate way too much and nodded off in the light of the gas lamp"



a lot of barbed wire rolled, it was back to thinking about food and where dinner might come from.

Cooking

This time, I wanted rabbit because I had the time to prepare and cook it mostly in daylight, but my favourite rabbiting spots here have been smashed on this permission due to an abundance of welcomed foxes. The farmer doesn't allow them to be shot because they are doing a great job of turning crop crunchers either on their heels, or into dinner. The challenge of bagging a crop robber that is already very aware of foxes and buzzards, and in reduced numbers, is tricky, but amazingly rewarding, calling on fieldcraft and utter stealth to succeed.

After an hour of unsuccessful stalking, I found a new spot on a down

that I'd never noticed before, with an excellent number of rabbit signs, so I decided to switch tactics and wait it out; an hour of waiting seemed a better bet than my fruitless stalking so far! I made myself comfortable and drifted into that hunter's trance we all know well from ambushes, and the minutes started to slide away. A good-looking doe snapped me back to reality at about 30 yards, I shouldered the R10, went through my well-rehearsed firing cycle, and the pellet hit home perfectly, dinner was served. As I only wanted the one, I moved forward and retrieved the rabbit immediately before hightailing it back toward camp.

Sat hello

As I crossed the farm track, I saw the guy I'd helped earlier, who offered

Below inset: Rabbit and wild garlic ragu. It doesn't get better than that

Bottom : Sitting low and still was all the hide I needed

me a swap - my whole rabbit for one that he had quartered and had ready in the fridge. He needed a rabbit for a still-life game scene he was sketching for a Christmas card, and didn't have the time to get one himself. Of course, I said 'yes' in a flash!

Once back at my camp I got going on my rabbit pasta dinner, throwing in some onion, a stock cube and some herbs, and as all truly worked for camp food is, it was delicious. I ate way too much and nodded off in the light of the gas lamp, only to wake up in the dark and head for the hay. A relaxing weekend like this is truly exhausting work! It sets me straight back up to deal with normal life for a couple more weeks, but teaches me that the greatest pleasures in life can be found in disconnecting yourself and living the simplest way for a day or two.

As a footnote, can I just point out that cooking outdoors with fresh game isn't without its contamination risks. Please be very aware of hygiene around butchery, and any kind of food preparation. A knife that has not been washed and then reused may well lead to a depleted loo roll, and your worst nightmare! ■

"The greatest pleasures in life can be found in disconnecting yourself and living the simplest way for a day or two"



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SLOE GIN

Jane Price gives us her tips to make the perfect winter tipple

Once the weather turns cooler and the days of foraging for blackberries and picking apples from the tree in our garden are long gone, it's time to think about collecting glossy blue sloes from the

Above: Enjoyed at home or as a gift for friends it's a great drink

Below: Don't they look delicious?



hedgerows.

When we made sloe gin two years ago we added too much sugar and the result was very syrupy. A friend of ours came to visit one evening and we made the mistake of offering some of our sloe gin to soothe her sore throat. The first few sips were gratefully received and the bottle didn't make it back to the cupboard!

According to old wives tales, you should pick your sloes after the first frost, but we usually find that the sloes that we have been watching on our usual dog walk have been picked by then. This year, we did what most people do and we picked them early and put them in the freezer, which seemed to work just as well.

Some recipes say sloes should be pricked with a thorn from the same bush, but others say to use a silver pin. Both of those methods are

METHOD

- 1) Put the sloes and sugar into the large jar and add the gin.
- 2) Mix thoroughly.
- 3) Put the jar in a dark place and return once a week to give the mixture a swirl around.
- 4) After three months use the sieve to remove the sloes, and then decant into smaller bottles, using the funnel.

messy and take ages, and romantic as they are, it's much easier to place the sloes in a bag and freeze them for a day or two. The point of pricking them is to break the skin, allowing the flavour to leak out while they are sitting in the gin. Freezing ruptures the sloes completely and evenly. Soak the sloes in the gin for three months to allow the colour and flavour get out of the fruit and into the alcohol, then drain and sieve or filter (you could use coffee filters) the gin, and slowly add a simple sugar syrup until it tastes just right for you. ■



TIP FROM JANE

After the sloes have been removed from the gin they can be used to enrich the flavour of wine or sherry by adding them to the bottle for a few weeks. Alternatively they can be used to provide rich boozy flavour to beef or venison gravy.

TO MAKE SLOE GIN

| | |
|-------------|-----------|
| Ingredients | Large jar |
| 700g sloes | Bottles |
| 1 litre gin | Funnel |
| 300g sugar | Sieve |



Country Kitchen



Above Right: It really doesn't take many ingredients

Left: Freezing ruptures the skin so the flesh comes into contact with the gin

Below: I like to use just a little sugar to begin and then sweeten to taste before bottling

Below right: Ensure that you mix until the sugar is dissolved

TOP TEN TIPS FOR THE BEST SLOE GIN:

- 1) Pick your sloes while enjoying the autumn sunshine — don't wait for winter!
- 2) Put them in the freezer overnight to simulate a frost
- 3) Always use good quality gin
- 4) Add only a small amount of sugar at the beginning
- 5) Try adding flavours such as toasted almond flakes, never essence
- 6) Taste and then sweeten with sugar syrup at the bottling stage
- 7) Make sure you show the year on the bottle label
- 8) Decant into small bottles and wrap up as gifts
- 9) Enjoy mature sloe gin from last year or previous years
- 10) Enjoy a glass of sloe gin with your sweetheart



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RANGEFINDING

FACTS

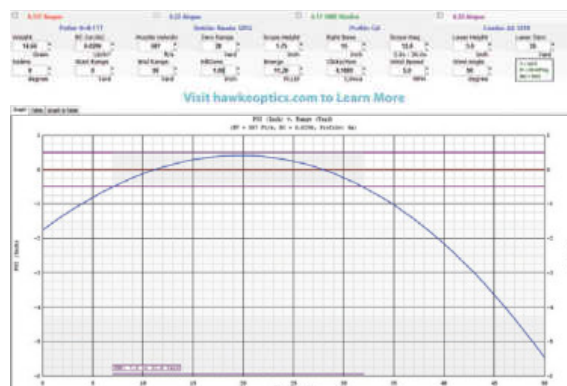
The editor tells us why all hunters should use a rangefinder

I've been running surveys to better understand the Air Gunner readership and one question I asked recently was, 'when hunting, do you use a rangefinder?' The vast majority of you said no, yet many of you claimed to be able to hunt out to 45 yards or more, all of which perplexes me. The reason I worry so much is that the trajectory of our airguns is very curved, and even quite small errors in range estimation make a big difference to accurate shot placement. Airguns kill by penetrating our quarry's brain, not by hydrostatic shock as bullet-firing rifles do. A shot that misses the brain may wound, but not kill, and we must do everything in our power to prevent that. It doesn't matter which calibre you choose, or the pellet you select, precision is everything.

I also learned from my survey that many of you still shoot .22, so let's take a look at the trajectory of a typical .22 at 11.5 ft.lbs. The optimum zero range is 28 yards,

which means that our first zero is at 12 yards and the pellet is within half an inch of our sight line from 7 to 32 yards. Because of this if you just aim straight at your rabbit's brain you'll hit it, although it would still be better to aim $\frac{1}{2}$ " low at 20 yards and $\frac{1}{2}$ " high at 32 yards for best precision.

Below: Looking at this trajectory graph shows you just how serious ranging errors are

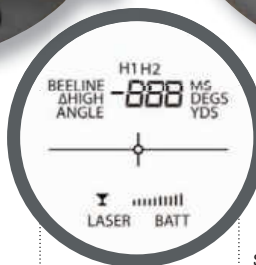


Long-range error

Now let's think about our readers who hunt at 45 yards. How low do you think their pellets will be? One inch, two inches? No - over $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", that's how much! How on earth would you judge that? Clever reticles can help when judging hold over, but it's still tricky. If you made an error in your

judgement and your rabbit was in fact at 50 yards, then the pellet drop would be $5\frac{1}{2}$ " inches. Think about that. It's an extra 2" of drop in five yards.

It's for this reason that I implore all hunters to keep their hunting distances short, so that the odds of placing your shot accurately are best. Next, I ask you to think seriously about buying a rangefinder. Out in the woods, many things can trick us into ranging errors such as looking across flat, open ground or down an avenue of trees. I've been working on my



Above: The LFR 400 reticle can supply a lot of information but not all at the same time

Top left: The eye piece screws in and out to suit our individual eyes

Top right: The upper lens is optical whilst the lower one emits and received laser light

your quarry clearly yet is not too sensitive to our wobbles and shakes. I have to say that the image quality was the best I've ever seen from this kind of rangefinder, making it work well as a monocular as well. I've improved my own ranging skill by carrying a rangefinder around with me when walking the dogs. I spot a branch that looks like it might make a good perch for a pigeon or a squirrel, and estimate the distance. Then I check it with the laser to see how well I did. This can be done over and over during

angle and hold under by the correct amount. Speaking as somebody who shoots a lot of squirrels every winter, I promise you it works and my kill rate has improved greatly.

Pellets striking high when shooting upwards is not something well understood by the majority of airgun hunters, and I implore you to learn just how high your scope/rifle/pellet combination hits at different distances and angles. This is not just a matter of increasing your bag, it is also your responsibility as an ethical hunter to ensure that your kills are clean.

www.hawkeoptics.com
RRP £139.99

Below: The textured finish offers good grip



"I have to say that the image quality was the best I've ever seen from this kind of rangefinder"

ranging skills for about 35 years and I've reached the lofty heights of 'not bad' and no better. I use a rangefinder all the time.

Looking around for a good example of the breed, I came across the Hawke Sport Optics LRF400. It's compact and feels good in the hand, with its textured surface. It has just two buttons; one switches it on and does the ranging, whilst the other allows you to select from the menu. Although it has a number of clever features, the most important one is rangefinding, which is easy to use and reliable. You can select yards or metres to suit your taste, and I stayed with yards because that's what I've always used.

6x 25

The optical specification is 6x 25, which is a popular one for good reason. 6x is enough to let you see

the walk and slowly your brain gets better at the task.

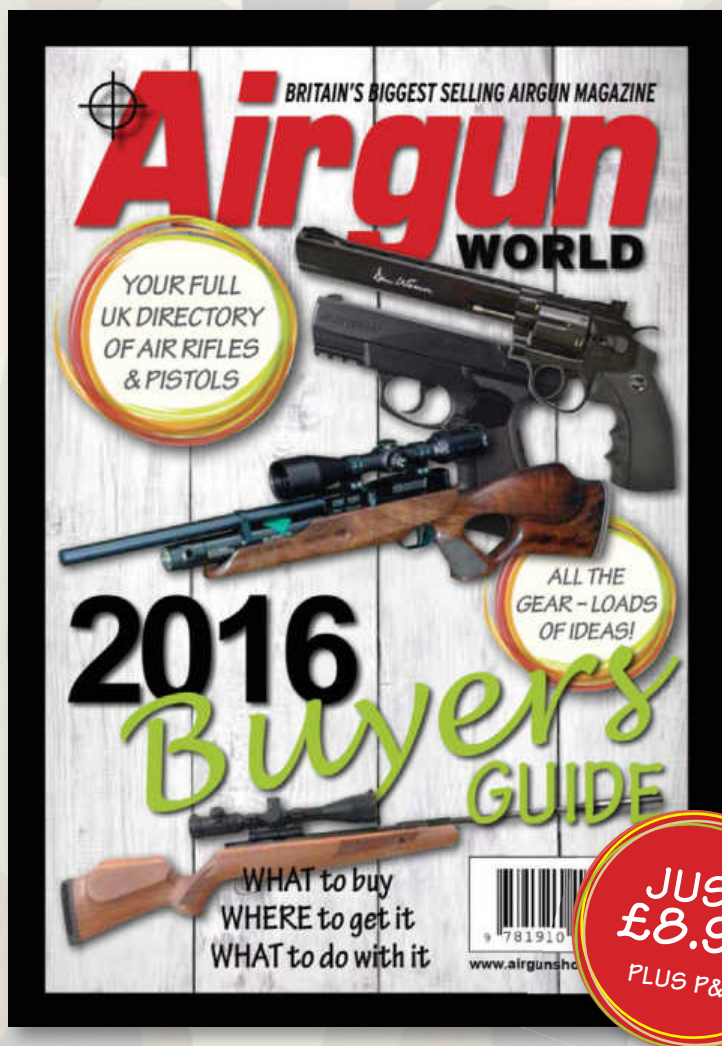
The LRF400 can be a huge help with learning about shooting upwards. When we fire upwards, our pellets are less affected by gravity and land higher than we expect. The angle we fire at affects this and the LRF400 has the option of telling you just what that is. I practise on dead trees to see just how high the pellet strikes, and then measure the angle precisely. This is then logged in my memory so that if I have a similar shot at my quarry in the future, I can use the rangefinder to read the

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WALTHER CP88

Steve Prime finds some love for Co2 at last

When it comes to creating any airgun, whether it's a rifle or pistol, the manufacturers have to take into account so many considerations before production takes place. Most copy old-styled guns, making airgun replicas as close to the original as possible; some design their own models with individual styling, but the result has to be the same - it must meet the sports criteria and, more importantly, sell.

As a buyer, the first thing we will take in is the aesthetics of the thing - after all we don't want an ugly gun, but herein lies another conundrum because one man's meat is another's poison, and beauty is in the eye of the beholder - to pull out a couple of apt sayings. If you were to break down suitability into percentages, then I would bet my bottom dollar that 60%

me rephrase that; I am not a lover of

of an IPAS (Iron Plate Action Shoot) member who recommended it as a great starter pistol for speed shooting.

"I am not a lover of Co2 pistols - let me rephrase that; I am not a lover of the accuracy"

to 70% of one's first impression is down to aesthetics, with 20% on how well it shoots, and 10% on how the gun feels. Once you are happy with the appearance of your chosen gun, you could reset the chart and 75% would then be for how the gun shoots - accuracy being most important - and the other 25% on how it actually feels balance-wise.

Co2

This leads me nicely into this article. I am not a lover of Co2 pistols - let

I didn't like the black version, so spent a little more money and got the nickel model, and over time, I had two of these and sold them both on. A few more Co2 pistols passed through my slippery fingers until I set eyes on the Walther CP99 - in particular, the 'bicolor' as it is written on the box; the top section is in a brushed chrome look with a black base. Yep - 100% scored for aesthetics. Unfortunately, a colleague of mine thought the same and took it off my hands - he still has it today! In the meantime, a few more

Main: The bi-colour model is good looking

Below: Accuracy was better than I'd expected



delights have graced my gun cabinet, but none of them had the same appeal as the CP99.

I hold an RFD (Registered Firearms Distributor), so I am lucky I can buy direct and when a club member requested that I purchase a Walther CP99, in Snow Star, for him, I decided to double the order and add another bicolour (spelt the way we do) CP99 for my own use. This led to me looking at some of the other models that have come to the market to tempt the buyer; plain black, olive green (bushcraft), bicolour, Snow Star, light brown (dark earth) and camo - all these colours can be found for this little pistol. Each one has its place, and I believe this is extremely clever marketing, appealing to a wider market - as well as collectors. I love the look of the Nighthawk with its camo body, screw on silencer and red-dot sights - it gives the CP99 a real military look and feel. Whichever design you choose, the weight and balance is superb and each shoots identically, as you would expect. The only issue I have is the trigger because the pull is a little long for my liking, but as with all things, it is something you get used to with use.

Convenient and safe

It is also handy having a dropout Co2 chamber, making access to loading and the

discarding of the Co2 cylinder that much easier and safer, because it's an operation carried out away from the main pistol itself. I found that the CP88 had cycling issues, with the magazine jamming on occasions during firing, something that has not occurred with the CP99.

What about accuracy? Well, it's not something to write home about, but it's on a par with the CP88 and, to my mind, better than most Co2 charging pistols. The only other gun I have found more precise on accuracy is the Smith and Wesson 356, but this is a completely different style of pistol and one not to be sneered at.

The Umarex CP99 is a copy of the Original Walther P99, which was released in 1997 and shortly afterwards starred in the James Bond film, 'Tomorrow Never Dies' when 007 used the pistol to great effect. It has also taken centre stage in many other films, including 'The Bourne Identity'.

The Umarex copy has a metal slide and polymer frame and grip, giving the pistol lightness and rigidity. It has an eight-shot rotary magazine taking .177 pellets, and as with the original pistol, it has no external



Above: The Nighthawk version is all dressed up with accessories

hammer, but a firing striker hidden in the rear part of the slide. The barrel is 3.5 inches long and the pistol has a 7-inch overall length. It weighs 1.6lbs and produces around 345 fps. The front sight is fixed with an adjustable rear sight, which can be altered by two cross-head screws located beneath the rear slide. A manual slide safety is found on the right-hand side, with a red dot visible when the pistol is ready to fire.

In a recent club fun competition when competitors shot a full, pistol HFT course, the winner used his

Left: A 12 gramme Co2 capsule is used



"released in 1997 and shortly afterwards starred in the James Bond film, 'Tomorrow Never Dies'"



one that will give hours of fun and great service to its owner. All you need to decide is which design takes your eye, and which icon you wish to emulate - Matt Damon or Pierce Brosnan. ■



SWAP SHOP

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40FT LB .22 Daystate Air Ranger with 3-9 x 12 Simmons scope plus Daystate silencer. In mint condition with walnut highly polished stock. Recently serviced by gun shop where purchased. Complete with 12lt x 300 bar air bottle and all fittings. £750 for both. Buyer must hold fac. Tel: 01268 556403 (Essex).

BSA ULTRA Multishot MK1, blueprinted by its creator John Bowkett. Black synthetic stock. 6-24 X 50 illuminated etched mil-dot scope on one-piece mount. Carbon fibre silencer and BSA Ultra slip £350. Can post. Tel: 07789 534614 (Essex).

THEOBEN EVOLUTION .20, with hand styled walnut stock by Don Robinson. Nice condition, buyer collects, no postage £400. Tel: 01728 648739 (Suffolk).

Air Arms S510 SL Carbine .22. Good condition with Q Tec silencer, sling, swivels no scope £430. Tel: 01754 873591.

BROCK COCK CONTOUR XL Elite .22, with silencer, 3 ltr fill tank all new April plus Walther 4-12 x 50 illuminated scope £600. Tel: 0208 974 6748 (Surrey).

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DAYSTATE RED Ranger .20 believed to be only one of 3 produced in this calibre, mint, unused with paperwork. Serious offers only plus MTC Taipan SCB 4 - 16x50 scope, black, mint condition in box £195. Tel: 07824 634111 (Norfolk).

BRITANNIA AIR rifle wanted in .25 + .177 stamped Cox's patent Anglo Sure Shot C.G Bonehill. Plus pre 1960 under levers by BSA Diana, Original, Falke, Webley etc, plus any other spring operated item including air pistols. Tel: 01689 852862 (Kent).

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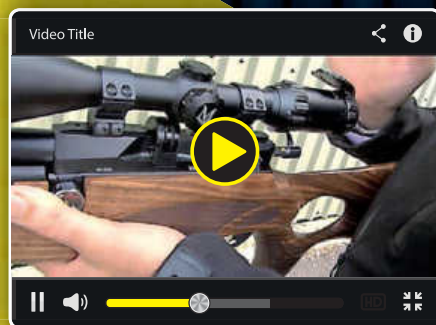
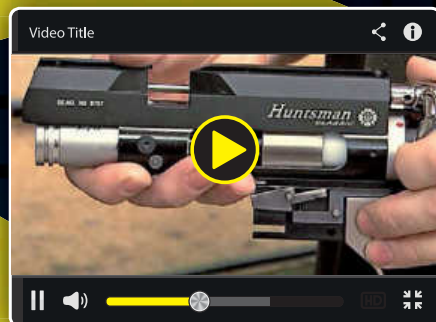
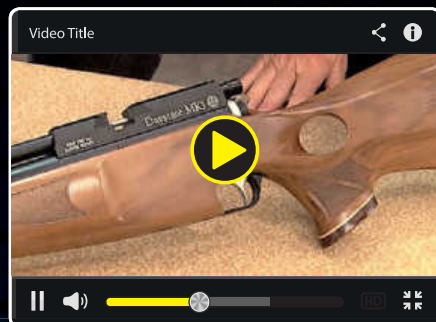
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AIRGUN COLLECTION

BY JOHN ATKINS

New Year Airguns from 1929 by John Atkins

Additional photographs by Nigel Allen

Figure 1



The New Year joy bells were ringing out on the front of Gavin Clyde Bell's Modern Gun Mart Guide Book No. 52a - as can be seen in **Figure 1** - but just which year is not immediately apparent, because this information does not appear on the now rather scruffy, vertically creased front cover, where it informs that the catalogue was published from their 46 Windsor Terrace, Glasgow, N.W. address. Eventually, I found a small line inside the cover stating that their 60-page list of fishing tackle would be ready January 1930, pinpointing my gun catalogue year as 1929.

It's often possible to date a gun catalogue by the content alone, but G. Clyde Bell's lists are more confusing than any other, due to many of the guns he sold being very old stock, some originating from different decades! I've often thought that his customers, after sending for a gun by mail order, might get a different and more modern model than depicted by the ancient printing block he'd utilised. However, his comment on

Figure 2



the back cover seems to dispel this idea. He undertakes to return cash on any article that is not as represented in his catalogue because he has perfect confidence in the goods he sells. So it really does appear that the guns customers received were often unsold stock, either passably or accurately, resembling the catalogue illustrations.

Bell would seemingly have bought batches of guns from manufacturers, and wholesalers' warehouses, and given them his own names. A pointer to the catalogue's year is that the air pistol page I'll be featuring later, advertised the Webley 'Junior' air pistol, but not the 'Senior' model appearing in 1930. The model that the Senior replaced - the 'Mark 11 Target' - was still being offered along with the Mark 1 pistol, so that made me think that this Bell catalogue dated from 1929, even before I saw the date. Webley had considered introducing a Junior air pistol as early as 1925, but it wasn't until late 1928 that production began and the pistol was announced in *The Sporting Goods Review* on January 31st 1929, as shortly being available. Webley did not anticipate that this small model, built on the same lines as their Mark

1 and Mark 11 pistols, would in any way interfere with the demand and sale of the larger pistols, but it had been designed especially to compete against the cheap foreign air pistols selling in this country and elsewhere.

G. Clyde Bell catalogues are avidly collected now, and they are some of the most entertaining gun catalogues ever printed, partly due to the hilarious exaggerations and wild statements made by the proprietor. In days past, during the Twelve Days of Christmas in Scotland, no court had power during these days - so maybe Gavin thought he could say what he liked in his catalogues and get away with it, without anyone taking him to court for his outrageous claims. For instance, calling Victorian air canes the 'latest novelties' for village lads (**Figure 2**) in his earlier 1926 Bargain List No. 21, when they were actually very old stock still being offered. An example of a straight, black japanned, air cane and pump, similar to those sold by Gavin Clyde Bell up until at least 1926 is pictured in **Figure 3**. Like all the cartridge-operated walking-stick guns he also sold, it could be 'Carried to church without fear of detection' - as he headed his walking-stick gun page!

Mix of old and modern

By the 1929 catalogue I'm now featuring, the pneumatic air canes had disappeared, along with many of the other airguns seen in the 1925 and 1926 Bell catalogue airgun pages I've shown in the past, to be replaced

Figure 1: The bells ring out for the New Year on the cover of Gavin Clyde Bell of Glasgow's Guide Book of 1929

Figure 2: Gavin Clyde Bell's 'latest novelties' in his 1926 Bargain List were actually old stock, English air canes from the Victorian and very early Edwardian eras, still being offered

Figure 3: Straight, black japanned, air cane and pump, similar to those sold by Gavin Clyde Bell up until at least 1926

Figure 3

Figure 4: Top: King Single Shot No. 21 (made c.1913 to 1932); M & G 'Hercules' s. no. 3479 (advertised in Germany in 1909); Haenel 'Old' Model No.1 date stamped: 9.29 and Langenhan 'Millita' sliding top latch (pre 1901) s. no. 1278

Figure 5: A curious selection of American and German airguns from different periods, all offered by G. Clyde Bell in 1929. The 'Wonderful New Bell-Craig' rifle is illustrated by a long, obsolete, 1900-type Langenhan 'Millita' model with sliding rearsight/barrel retaining latch

Figure 6: Haenel 'Old' Model 1 air rifles dated 11.28 and 9.29 - the same date as the G. Clyde Bell catalogue

by newer models. Other 'oldies' were still on offer making an eclectic mix of old and new, as seen in **Figure 4**: Top: King Single Shot No. 21 (made c.1913 to 1932); M & G 'Hercules' s. no. 3479 (advertised in 1909 by H. Burgsmüller & Son with a different latch); Haenel 'Old' Model No.1 date stamped: 9.29 and Langenhan 'Millita' sliding top latch (pre 1901) s. no. 1278.

'No Permits for Airguns' says the heading strap of this Scottish catalogue page 46 - which is as it should be, of course, as any right-thinking person knows. **Figure 5** shows the curious selection of American and German airguns from different periods all offered by G. Clyde Bell in 1929. The drawing of the sleep deprived, dressing-gown-clad shooter potting at the performers in the cat concert is barbaric and illegal nowadays - as are the references to shooting at a songbird like the blackbird. Maybe no one thought anything of this in 1929. I'm unsure if gamekeepers ever considered blackbirds as a pest species, but fruit growers would not have been fans; I know blackbirds have a liking for buds and fruit and often peck and spoil strawberries, one after another, until they find the one they particularly like!

Replacing the ancient American Columbian cast-iron, lever-loading airgun advertised at 9/- (45p) post free, in the 1926 Bell catalogue, was the Markham King No. 21 lever-action at 7/- (35p). Postage on this was 9d (4p). With the guns sold by G. Clyde Bell,

customers could pay the postman on delivery of the parcel. While the Cash on Delivery system is still alive and well around the world, imagine the postman of today standing at the door whilst you checked the parcel, opened it to reveal a gun, and then gave him the cash for him to have to carry on his round.

The heavy German 'Hercules', sold by G. Clyde Bell as the 'Speedy' is fairly powerful for the type but is inhumane for the rat shooting suggested here, because it would more likely wound, rather than kill a larger rodent outright. These breech-loaders have three different types of latch over the years they were made. The illustration shows a 'reverse spoon'- rather than the 'spoon' seen at the back of the 'T'-bar latch in the photograph of the nickelled 'Hercules'. They vary, just like those on the MGR 'Lady's Model' Gem-types. In the 1930s, the 'Hercules' stocks must have been exhausted and were replaced in the Clyde Bell

catalogues by the Diana No. 15 airgun, still

Figure 5

Air Guns: Strongest and Best.

THE BOYS' AIR GUN, for Slugs or Darts.

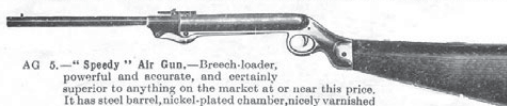
A light, handy, and well-made gun, nicely plated, and easily worked. Selling in thousands. Price only 4/6; postage and packing 6d extra.

Heavier make, with lever-loading mechanism, 7/-; postage 9d extra.



To Parents and Guardians.—Lord Roberts said:—"Every Britisher should be taught how to handle a rifle and shoot straight"; so it rests with you to do your duty to your youngsters. Purchase your boy an Air Gun to start with, and we can cheerfully say that every dog, cat, and rat that is not buried will give your house a wide berth.

The "SPEEDY" AIR GUN (Breech-loading) kills Blackbirds, Sparrows, Rats, &c.



AG 5.—"Speedy" Air Gun.—Breech-loader, powerful and accurate, and certainly superior to anything on the market at or near this price. It has steel barrel, nickel-plated chamber, nicely varnished stock, well made throughout. Shoots No. 1 Darts and Slugs with extraordinary force and precision. Price—12/6 each, post and packing free.

AG 7.—New American Pattern, similar to above, shoots either slugs or darts. It is a breech-loader, and dart or slug is placed in breech end of barrel. Weights 2 lbs. Price—12/- post free.

AG 8.—New Model Yankee, fitted with special dart pocket and 3 darts, 14/- post free.

No postage for slugs, &c., when ordered with air gun.

The "THISTLE" AIR GUN. Very strong and well made.

Length, 38½ ins.

Weight, 4 lbs. 10 ozs.

Smooth Bore, 18/6 post free.

Rifled Bore, 20/6 post free.

The Famed "Thistle" Model is of very sound construction, all parts being of steel, with improved locking bolt which air locks the barrel securely and facilitates the action of compression. Walnut stock of unique design as shown in illustration. Neatly finished and well polished. Grip fore-end. Adjustable back-sight. For slugs or darts.

A Wonderful Air Rifle—The New "Bell-Craig" Air Rifle.

As used by many prominent Air Gun Clubs for League Matches.



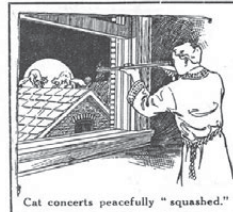
The "Bell-Craig" Air Rifle, for Air Gun Clubs, etc.

Price—28/6 post free, smooth bore; 27/6 rifle bore.

Heavier Model with pistol grip stock, 30/6 post free.

No. 6.—This Rifle is very strongly made, and finely adapted for Air Gun Clubs where a strong gun is required. It is a particularly accurate gun, and the length and shape allow the weapon to come well to the shoulder. It is noiseless, and can be used in town gardens for destroying blackbirds, sparrows, &c., and also for bursting up cat concerts. Price—Only 25/-, post free. No permit is required to purchase or use any air gun. No licence required to use an air gun in own garden or house.

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Bisley Hollow Slugs—1000, 1/3; postage 6d.
B.S.A. Slugs—1000, 1/6; postage 6d.
Solid Slugs—1000, 1/6; postage 6d.
King Hollow Slugs—1/- per 1000.
Precision Super Slugs—500 for 1/6.

Figure 6



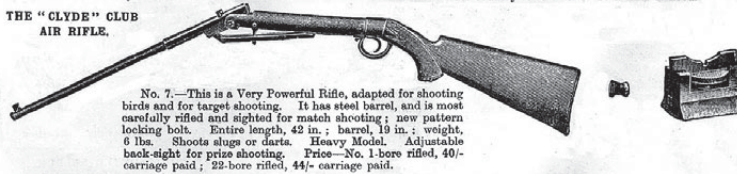
ADVANCED AIR RIFLES. Wonderful Penetrating Power.

THE "WILLIAM TELL" RIFLE CLUB AIR GUNS. All Blued.

Penetrate 1/2 inch White Deal Plank at 50 yards with 22-bore. | Penetrate 1/2 inch White Deal Plank at 25 yards with No. 1-bore.

The Air Rifles shown on this page are the best and most popular patterns for Club and Target Shooting. Over 5000 Rifle Clubs in town and country use them for serious work. Can't you start a Club in your district and so help to teach every able-bodied man and youth how to shoot, and thus how to be of real service to his country should there be a time of need.

THE "CLYDE" CLUB AIR RIFLE.



No. 7.—This is a Very Powerful Rifle, adapted for shooting birds and for target shooting. It has steel barrel, and is most carefully rifled and sighted for match shooting; new pattern locking bolt. Entire length, 42 in.; barrel, 19 in.; weight, 6 lbs. Shoots slugs or darts. Heavy Model. Adjustable back-sight for prize shooting. Price—No. 1-bore rifled, 40/- carriage paid; 22-bore rifled, 44/- carriage paid.

THE CLUB AIR GUN FOR MATCH SHOOTING.

As used by many prominent Air Gun Clubs for League Matches. Weight, 6 1/2 lbs.; Length, 42 1/2 ins.



Full length, 42 1/2 in. Club Gun, with Pistol Grip Stock, Blue or Nickel Plated, 44/- post free.

This is a very powerful rifle adapted for shooting birds and for target practice. For killing sparrows, rats, and pests of that kind it is absolutely perfection. Although so powerful, it is safe to use in an ordinary garden. The rifle shoots as accurately as the prohibited ball cartridge up to 40 yards, and the ammunition costs only 1/6 per 1000. Over 5000 Rifle Clubs use them. Can't you start a Club in your district? Club Air Gun, as illustrated, 44/- carriage paid. Ditto, lighter weight, 4 1/2 lb.; length, 38 1/2 in., 34/- carriage paid. Springs for "Gem" Air Gun—1/6; postage 3d. Plungers for "Gem" Air Gun—3/-; postage 3d. Guards for "Gem" Air Gun—3/-; postage 3d.

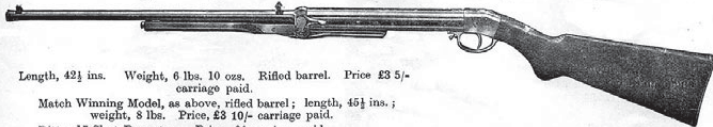
CARD TARGETS.

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| 4-in. square, N.A.R.A. ... 1/- per 100; postage 6d. | 4-in. Two-colour ... 1/- per 100; postage 6d. |
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| 6-in. 10 Ring Decimal ... 1/6 per 100; postage 6d. | 7 1/2-in. Two-colour ... 2/- per 100; postage 6d. |

THE NEW MATCH-WINNING AIR GUN.

MADE SIMILAR TO B.S.A.

The High Efficiency Air Guns are cocked by the under-lever compression movement.



Length, 42 1/2 ins. Weight, 6 lbs. 10 ozs. Rifled barrel. Price £3 5/- carriage paid.

Match Winning Model, as above, rifled barrel; length, 46 1/2 ins.; weight, 8 lbs. Price, £3 10/- carriage paid.

Ditto, 17-Shot Repeater. Price, £4 carriage paid.

These guns are deadly accurate, and very powerful. They will kill rabbits, rooks, and rats up to 25 yards range, and make no noise whilst doing the work. They are absolutely safe for use in a town garden.

These Models can be justly styled HIGH EFFICIENCY. The barrel and air cylinder is in one rigid body. The Rifles are cocked by means of a special under-lever which is released for the compression movement by a press spring at the fore end. A loading valve, opened and closed by a side lever for the reception of the pellet, is most accurately cut into the cylinder and gives an ABSOLUTELY AIRTIGHT CONNECTION BETWEEN THE BARREL AND THE COMPRESSION CYLINDER, so that the full pressure of air obtained can be brought into play for the shot itself without loss of compression.

All parts of these rifles are made of the best deep black burnished steel, and every Rifle is a specimen of HIGH CLASS, ACCURATE WORKMANSHIP. The stocks are finely grained walnut, neatly polished. The barrels HAVE CAREFULLY DRAWN RIFLING and are fitted with ADJUSTABLE REARSIGHTS and READ FOUR-SIGHTS.

B.S.A. AIR GUNS AT £4 AND £4 10s, NOW BY INSTALMENTS, LIST FREE.

While described as 'New', his old illustration showed a 30-year old model, but of course, there was no Trade Descriptions Act to prevent consumers being misled about what they were spending their money on in those days, so he could say more or less what he liked. This type of top latch was replaced by the familiar side-button catch on the side of the breech

(F. Langenhan's British Patent 15802 of 5.9.1900) and in turn, this was superseded in Patent 10411 of 1905 by the pendant-locking lever detent.

Figure 6 shows Haenel 'Old' Model 1 barrel cocking air rifles dated 11.28 and 9.29 - the same date as the G. Clyde Bell catalogue - so at least these were up to date, whilst Figure 7 details the positive barrel detent button of the Haenel old Model 1 that is pulled back to open the breech. Both the rearsight and cylinder end cap (of the old model only) will interchange with the identical compression cap and rearsight of the Haenel No. 28 single-shot air pistol. There are two types of Haenel Model 1 to find. This one is the first model made 1925 - 39, and the later post-war version that W. H. B. Smith calls the 'New Model 1' in his 1957 book, *Gas, Air, & Spring Guns of the World*. They are all quite old now, of course, but the later model has a different rearsight and a Mauser-type wing safety - as was shown in action, in Steve Prime's article on page 81 in the December issue, and I

Figure 7



being sold under the 'Speedy' name.

The 'Thistle' airgun, named after the 19, Thistle Street, Glasgow, C.3. 1926 address of Gavin Clyde Bell, replaced the 'Gem'-style airguns shown in earlier catalogues. At 38 1/4 inches (97 cm) long, it's the exact size of all three of my Haenel Model 1s and the barrel catch button, just about visible in the illustration, confirms the 'Thistle' was in fact the German Haenel No. 1 air rifle.

Selling old guns as new

The 'Wonderful New Bell-Craig' rifle is illustrated by a long obsolete c.1899-1900-type Langenhan 'Millita' model with the barrel retained by a sliding latch incorporating the rearsight.

Figure 9



Figure 7: Positive barrel latch of the Haenel Old Model 1. The rearsight and cylinder end cap will both interchange with the identical compression cap and rearsight of the Haenel No. 28 single-shot air pistol

Figure 8: 'William Tell' German air rifle page from the G. Clyde Bell 1929 Guide Book. The 'Clyde' Club is a Langenhan 'Millita' with a 1905 Patent underlatch. The 'Club' match rifle illustration is one more usually used to show the Diana No. 25. 'New Match-Winning Air Gun' is a Haenel Model IV

Figure 9: 'Millita D Model Club' serial number 51000 with earlier pivoting bar rearsight option. Apart from the unusual refined rearsight, the model was little changed when later shown in the G. Clyde Bell catalogue with screw-adjustable rearsight. [Photo: Courtesy of Nigel Allen]

Figure 10: The walnut butts found on some old 'Millita' pattern airguns are occasionally nicely figured, like this example that was restored by Nigel Allen. [Photo: Courtesy of Nigel Allen]

think Steve plans to revisit this airgun in his articles. Well worth looking at, and I agree with him that these are cracking air rifles.

The 'William Tell' air rifle club models feature on page 47 of the G. Clyde Bell 1929 Guide Book and are reproduced as Figure 8. The weird page heading: 'In the Ladder of Patriotism (sic) Every Shot Counts' ran for years without correction to 'Patriotism! The 'Clyde' Club at the top is a Langenhan 'Millita' with UK 1905 Patent No. 10411 underlatch that Bell describes as a 'new pattern-locking bolt'. While 24 years old, I suppose it is 'new', when compared with the one on his 'Bell Craig' air rifle!

The advertisement page tells us in two places that over 5,000 rifle clubs in town and country use the rifles shown on the page. In 1929, it's more likely that the BSAs advertised on the bottom line of the page were the rifles chosen for serious work, rather than the three illustrated rifles.

The 'Club' match shooting rifle is illustrated by the use of a printing block more usually used to depict the Diana No. 25, whilst the 'New Match -Winning Air Gun' is a German Haenel Model IV, at £3.10/- (£3.50) carriage paid - undercutting the price of the unillustrated British BSAs. Advertised at £4, but not illustrated, is Haenel's 17-shot repeater version of the Model IV. This is not another Clyde Bell inaccuracy, as it's quite correct and the Haenel repeating rifles were always advertised here and in Germany as 17-shot capacity - rather than the oft thought 18-shot - as erroneously stated in Leslie Wesley's book *Air-Guns and Air-Pistols*. After I showed him the German literature, Les admitted he'd got that wrong - counting the pan magazine aperture that is not supposed to be loaded with a pellet - just as I did initially.

The 'Clyde' Club



Figure 11

resembles the 'Millita' D Model Club' serial number 51000 with earlier pivoting bar rearsight option, also shown broken open in **Figure 9** - which forms part of Nigel Allen's collection. Apart from the unusual, refined rearsight, the model is little changed when shown in the G. Clyde Bell catalogue with screw-adjustable BSA-like rearsight. The walnut butts found on some old 'Millita' pattern airguns are occasionally nicely figured, like the example shown in **Figure 10** that was well restored by Nigel.

Suggested identities

Three other guns are advertised, but not illustrated in the Clyde Bell 1929 catalogue page 46, so we only have their descriptions to go on. Namely: 'The Boys' Air Gun' for slugs or darts. A light, handy and well-made gun, nicely plated and easily worked.' As it only cost 4/6d (22½p), I venture to suggest that this is most likely the popular Diana No. 1 shown at the top of **Figure 11** - this example actually being dated 1929 - but because Bell was certainly stocking Haenels, it could have been the very similar-looking Haenel Mark X seen in the centre of my photograph.

Other guns described were named as the 'New American

Pattern' at 12/- (60p) said to be similar to the 'Speedy' being a breech-loader, and the 'New Model Yankee', fitted with special dart pocket and three darts 14/- (70p) post free. This points to both guns being King No. 17 breech loaders dating from 1917-32, as seen at the foot of the photograph.

Unlike most American BB guns, which involved withdrawing a loading tube held in place at the muzzle end, the breech-loading King No. 17 broke down in the middle to compress the spring and load. In breaking down the barrel a metal rod in the shape of an elongated 'U', with the two ends fixed to the under portion of the barrel, travels down a long slot cut right through the body, forcing back the plunger (see **Figure 12**). The outside cocking rods are similar to those used on Capt. Markham's first successful wooden airgun - the 'Chicago' - that I looked at in my May 2014 article, which were resurrected for these metal King No. 17 and No. 24 airguns. Announced as 'A New Model 'King' Air Gun' in the June 1922 issue of *The Sports Trader*, the report said it could 'rightly be called the cheapest breech-loading airgun on the market.'

The variant with ammunition box adds 20% to the value, according to the useful *Blue Book of Airguns*, and as I don't know

of any other guns with this feature, it does appear that this is the gun sold as the 'New Model Yankee' by Gavin Clyde Bell in 1929. The handy dart compartment found on some King No. 17 airguns, below and behind the barrel pivot, is shown open in **Figure 13**.

At the time of publication of Clyde's range of airguns in his 1929 catalogue titled 'Joy Bells', none knew that on October 24th, the Wall Street Crash would plunge the world economy into the Great Depression with far-reaching consequences, leaving little money for many to buy airguns and other non-essentials. However, finishing on a more cheerful note, this New Year issue will be published well before Christmas allowing me time to wish all readers, especially collectors, best wishes for the festive season, and good luck in finding the airguns you seek in 2016. ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Thanks to Nigel Allen for the 'Millita' photographs.

SOURCES: Gavin Clyde Bell Catalogues from 1925, 1926 and 1929; H. Burgsmüller & Son catalogue 1909; *The Sports Trader* June, 1922; *The Sporting Goods Review* January 31st, 1929 and books mentioned in the text.



Figure 12

Figure 13

Figure 11: Advertised, but not illustrated in the Clyde Bell 1929 catalogue were possibly: Top: Diana No. 1 dated 1929, Haenel Mark X and King No. 17 breech loader c.1917-32

Figure 12: Unlike most American BB guns, which involved withdrawing a loading tube held in place at the muzzle end, the breech loading King No. 17 broke down in the middle to compress the spring and load

Figure 13: The handy dart or ammo compartment found on some King No. 17 airguns below and behind the barrel pivot is shown opened

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A DAY IN THE WOODS



Jerry Moss is out on foot removing the invasive grey squirrels

Since last month, the leaves have started to fall from the trees rapidly, so coupled with what natural food is left now being mainly on the woodland floor, this gives me more chance of seeing the grey squirrels going about their daily business.

The hazelnuts have long gone, the beech mast was very patchy, acorns seemed to be late and they were not in abundance, but the oak trees proved to be the areas to head into. In my area there are a lot of conifer plantations, which is great for the red squirrels because they prefer the cone-bearing trees; greys will do okay in these forests, but much prefer broad leaves if given a chance. So the estates that have a good number of oaks are the places I am concentrating on at the

moment. Red squirrels will also be present within these woodlands, so the removal of any unwanted tree rats is a matter of urgency.

A week ago, I headed over to one such estate in the early afternoon to have a slow walk around and see what was about. The wood I walked through first was a mixed forest of conifer and hardwoods, which then leads to strips of mature oaks that cross the farmland leading to other forests. I had been stocking these feeders for a couple of weeks, but had only seen red squirrels in the mixed plantation, and as I walked through, I saw, as usual, a few reds on or near feeding areas. As I emerged from this wood, I noticed a good number of pigeons feeding on the edge of the oak strip,

Above: Supported shots like this make a huge difference to accuracy

and that's always a good sign, I think. If you see pigeons feeding on the woodland floor and there are squirrels about, you can be sure they will be near these areas.

Nice and slow

I walked slowly through the oak strip and disturbed some pigeons, which in turn sent a grey squirrel shooting up the side of a big oak, so I stopped and watched as the tree rat went up the tree a bit further. I was approximately 40 metres away, and as far as I was aware the grey hadn't seen me, but was just spooked by the pigeons lifting. I decided to wait it out for a bit because I had the cover of a good-sized oak and

Below: I fitted a Hugget silencer for ultimate stealth

"I could see the swish of a tail with that white halo; it's a dead giveaway"



"After a short time I could see the grey making its way down the tree toward the ground"



Above: The stability of the Pulsar has to be felt to be believed

Left: I'm really getting into the Pulsar and it shows

Below: This a sight I'm always happy to see



INFORMATION



As always, we welcome your thoughts and ideas. Get in touch and tell us about the methods that work for you.

Follow Jerry on Facebook

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pennith-and-District-Red-Squirrel-Group/487229667979369?fref=ts>

if the tree rat came down to continue feeding on the ground, I would then have the opportunity for a clear shot.

After a short time, I could see the grey making its way down the tree. When it was back on the ground it started to hunt about for food, but was away from me, so I had no choice but to make a move and stalk along the wood. Luckily, it was in its own world, busy searching for a prize, so I managed to get within range and it was just a wait for a good clear shot.

The head appeared as it sat upright chewing on an acorn. I already had a good lean and my Daystate Pulsar shouldered, so I moved the cross hair of the Optisan EVX Prototype scope that I am trying out, on to its head. A squeeze of the trigger and the Rangemaster Kaiser .22 pellet was on its way, hitting home with that familiar smack.

Moving on

I carried on making my way through the oaks and, again, just out in the field I could see the swish of a tail with a white halo; it's a dead giveaway. Using the big oaks as cover, I made my way toward the grey and this one was also too busy hunting out food to take any notice of what was going on around it. It had its back to me, I put the cross hair on the lower part of its head and 'smack', it dropped. After another hour and nothing seen, I started to make my way back toward the mixed plantation. The day was getting on by now, and as I walked back through the conifers I managed to see a few reds darting about the ground and trees. Next month, I hope the squirrels are hitting the feeders harder, so until then - happy hunting! ■

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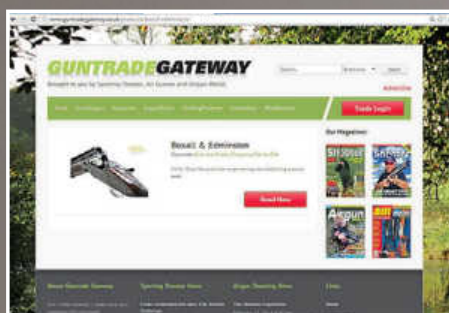
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TOP TIP

SLOWLY DOES IT ...

Phill Price tells us how 'less is more' when you're out in the field

Human beings are creatures driven to succeed and that often takes the form of doing more and trying harder, so when the advice is 'do less', we find it hard to accept. This shows up when people go hunting. They rush around, thinking that if they just look in the next field or up the next tree they'll find their quarry, and quite often they're wrong. The main reason for this is that they scare their quarry away before they even see it. Wild animals have incredible senses and can detect us from huge distances. If our scent is carried on the wind, rabbits will pick it up and bolt down their burrow before we get within a hundred yards. Pigeons have the most amazing vision, which is highly attuned to movement, so the unaware hunter strolling through a roosting wood will scatter them like a bow wave several

hundred yards ahead.

A wise old hunter taught me a simple truth decades ago. He said that our quarry is just as likely to be where we are now as where we're going, so stand still, shut up and then listen and look. Can you see the squirrel's tail hanging from that branch? Is that a pigeon behind a screen of twigs?

"Don't think the squirrels and pigeons can't speak blackbird"

As long as you stand still in some cover you have a chance of finding the quarry. As soon as you move, every living thing will notice you. The blackbird that you showed no interest will rocket away making a shrieking a message that all the other creatures understand. Danger! Predator! Don't think the squirrels and pigeons can't speak blackbird - they most

certainly can.

When you're sure there are no quarry animals or birds around you, move slowly and quietly a few yards into cover, and then stop to study again. Repeat this slow, deliberate routine and you'll disturb the countryside far less.

The old chap also told me to use my eyes four times as much as my feet, by which he meant stand and look for four minutes for every minute you walk. Many people hesitate as they walk, glance around and set off again. That's the wrong way. Don't glance - study. Follow each branch of a tree from the trunk to the tips. Follow each curve of the hedge from your toes to the horizon, slowly. This way you'll see the rabbit's ears in the grass that you'd have otherwise overlooked.

Move less and you'll bag more, I promise. ■

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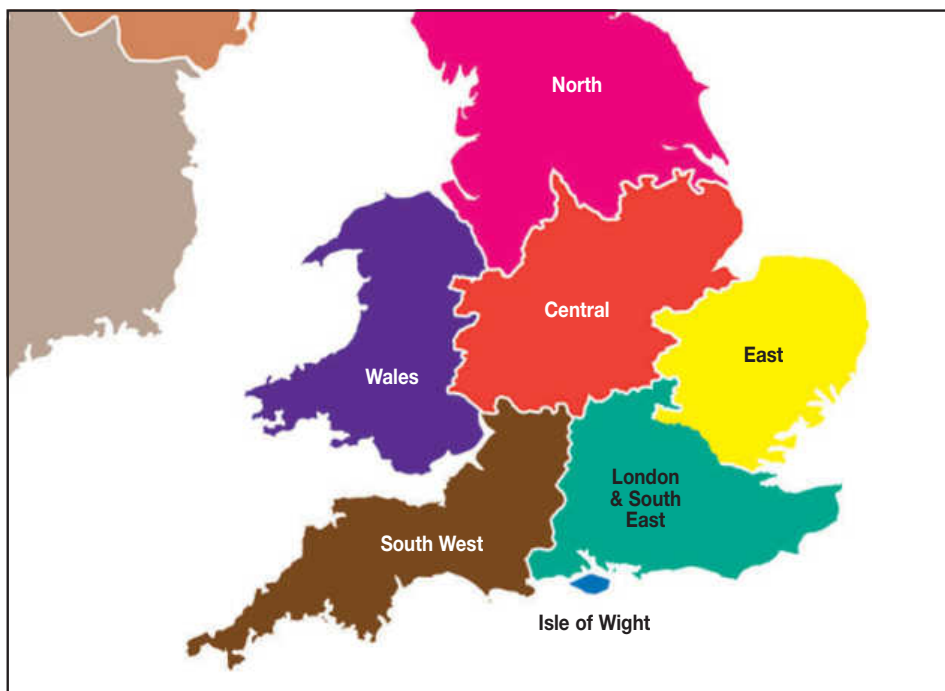
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- Product Code: ASGP18192
- 4.5mm Metal BB
- Velocity - 130/ms / 3 Joule
- 6" Barrel with Silver Finish
- Houge® rubberised grip design with carved DW logo
- Unique cylinder release latch functionality
- Integrated tool for tightening CO2 cartridge
- .357 Magnum engraving on the full metal heavy duty outer barrel
- Rough patterned hammer design for improved thumb grip
- Heavyweight of 1.2kg
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- Elegant safety button design



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- Product Code: ASGP18193
- .177 Rifled Barrel
- Velocity - 130/ms / 3 Joule
- 6" Barrel with Steel Grey Finish
- Houge® rubberised grip design with carved DW logo
- Unique cylinder release latch functionality
- Integrated tool for tightening CO2 cartridge
- .357 Magnum engraving on the full metal heavy duty outer barrel
- Rough patterned hammer design for improved thumb grip
- Heavyweight of 1.2kg
- Fully adjustable rear sight - windage and elevation
- Elegant safety button design



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ASGP18101

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- Mag Capacity: 6 rounds
- Replacement Shells: 17833

- Velocity: 130ms/426fps
- Weight: 870gr/1.9lb
- Energy: 3 Joule



.177 PELLET



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Dan Wesson, 6" Silver Pellet Airgun

ASGP17611

- Length: 298mm/12.0inch
- Barrel length: 136mm/5.5inch
- Mag Capacity: 6 rounds
- Replacement Shells: 17833

- Velocity: 130ms/426fps
- Weight: 1014gr/2.2lb
- Energy: 3 Joule



.177 PELLET



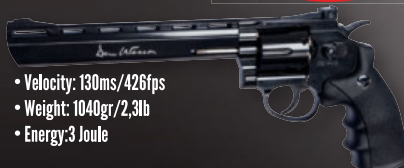
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Dan Wesson, 8" black Pellet Airgun

ASGP17612

- Length: 338mm/13.6inch
- Barrel length: 181.5mm/7.3inch
- Mag Capacity: 6 rounds
- Replacement Shells: 17833

- Velocity: 130ms/426fps
- Weight: 1040gr/2.3lb
- Energy: 3 Joule



.177 PELLET



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